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# THE INTERREGNUM

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# THE INTERREGNUM

BY

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TO  
E. S. W.  
IN MEMORY OF THE  
ALBATROSS BREAKFASTS  
AND OF THE  
HISTON GRINDS



## PREFACE

THE scope of this book is fully explained in the Introduction; the circumstances of its writing are of little interest, except as partly excusing mistakes of quotation and reference that may be found. It is the result of some years' thought, but it was written in the spare time of a busy existence, and away from libraries and all but a few books. I have tried not to misrepresent anyone's statements and opinions, and apologise if I have unwittingly done so. My best thanks are due to those who have kindly revised the Theology and Mathematics for me; and especially to the friend without whose inspiration, encouragement, and help nothing could have been attempted; to whom this book is most gratefully dedicated.

R. A. P. H.

PEKING, CHINA

5 *April* 1913

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## INTRODUCTION

THESE Essays were not written to "prove Christianity." I do not think it desirable or even possible to make a man a Christian by argumentation. At the same time the apologist has a definite and not unimportant part to play. When Christ raised Lazarus from the dead He first commanded others to take away the stone. These Essays are primarily designed to help a certain class of men, and their scope will be clear if I explain their title. By "The Interregnum" I mean that stage in a man's mental development when the old beliefs and sanctions of childhood are lost and he has not yet had time to form new views of his own. To many this happens at the most formative years of life, during their University career, and the doubts then generated tend to separate them from the fellowship of men who would prove truly helpful. I hope these Essays may enable such men to mix sympathetically with Christian men even while conscious that their own opinions on many vital matters are yet unformed.

A leading characteristic of a man in the interregnum is diffidence. He finds experts disagreeing and feels himself incompetent to decide. He is chary of being persuaded by any elaborate argument, feeling that there may be another side to the question, which he has not yet heard. In short he is unwilling to make up his mind on disputed questions until he has had time to study them thoroughly. This will explain why the Christianity put forward in these Essays is only a meagre, outline Christianity; and other features also are to be referred to the point of view from which I start,—the point of view of the interregnum. As far as possible all elaboration of argument is avoided; nothing is assumed that is not beyond all reasonable question, each step in the argument is as simple as possible, and no authorities, secular or sacred, are quoted except to illustrate the attitude of scientists, philosophers, or the sacred writers, to the question under discussion, never to compel assent. Consequently only the broadest outlines can be included, for the elaboration of pros and cons by which many not unimportant elements of the Christian creed can be established is necessarily ruled out.

The first part aims simply at showing that it is a natural, right, reasonable and desirable thing for a man who would follow "the good" to associate himself sympathetically with Christians as a Christian during the interregnum, even when the balance of evidence

may seem to him against Christianity. In the second part I show that the case has not been finally closed against Christianity by any of the rival systems that have been in vogue. To this end these systems are very briefly outlined and discussed, not with the idea of refuting them, but only in order to show that they no less than Christianity have their objections and difficulties. In this section I have sometimes given two or three alternative arguments, perhaps incompatible with one another. Very commonly in the interregnum some one difficulty or rival system looms large and creates a prejudice against Christianity: to natural science students materialism and determinism often seem to have won the day, and such students feel convinced that further examination can only confirm their exclusive claims. My object has been to break the back of this dominance and set the student free to pursue his enquiries with a mind truly open, only asking him to remember that free thought that is truly thought and truly free need not necessarily lead to one of the systems that have claimed the name. Any reader who is already obsessed with some such difficulty will do well to read the second part first, especially Chapters XI and XII.

In this second part I have further tried to show that there is a reasonable ground for thinking that Christianity is true from the purely speculative standpoint; but the success or failure of this attempt does

not affect the main argument, which is embodied in the first part. In the Appendix I have added sundry explanations of the more difficult points, and short summaries of parts of the main argument of the book.

In writing these Essays I have had in mind another class of men—Christians who have to deal with men in the interregnum. Bad apologetic is common and disastrous. Much that is taught in theological schools is useful enough in special cases or for “skirmishing,” but does not go to the root of the matter. Some, recommended by well-known preachers and evangelists, is positively dishonest; and, though it may suffice to quiet a caviller at an open air meeting, it would be ruinous if one’s opponent happened to understand the position. I hope that some such readers, recognising old arguments, may see how they depend entirely on their setting for their validity.

I would again beg Christian readers to realise that the limitations of the interregnum account for the attitude taken up on many questions. I am well aware that many important points are left out; but it must be remembered that religious experience differs widely and the roads to Christ are many. In these Essays it has been impossible to presuppose that Christian experience which gives so luminous a meaning to the Christian creed; and my one object has been to remove an obstacle which I know to stand between many men and the beginnings of a road to Christ; to try and



give a meaning, true and acceptable albeit a bare one, to the language used in Christian circles and literature to communicate their experiences and ideals. I do not put this forward as a final resting place for any man, but as a stepping stone, or a guide in darkness.

“‘Do you see yonder wicket-gate?’ The man said, ‘No.’ Then said the other, ‘Do you see yonder shining light?’ He said, ‘I think I do.’ Then said Evangelist, ‘Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto; so shalt thou see the gate<sup>1</sup>.’”

<sup>1</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*.



# PART I

## CHAPTER I

### FAITH

Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.  
Hebrews xi. 1.

And there are some whom a thirst  
Ardent, unquenchable, fires  
Not with the crowd to be spent,  
Not without aim to go round  
In an eddy of purposeless dust.

MATTHEW ARNOLD. *Rugby Chapel.*

We cannot live and move without faith, that is clear. Is it not, then, rational to believe in the best?

JAMES WARD. *The Realm of Ends.*

THE large number of definitions of "faith," "un-faith," and "religion" is evidence enough that these words are commonly used in a popular, unscientific way; and therein, I believe, lies the root of a great deal of the confusion surrounding the whole subject. I must therefore begin with a brief analysis of the different mental and spiritual processes involved in religion, assigning to each the popular term which seems best to fit it. Throughout these Essays I shall use these terms strictly in the senses here more or less

arbitrarily assigned to them. Their meanings will be different from those connoted in common usage, but when the definition of a term excludes certain elements usually included, the missing elements will be found included in another term, or will be discussed separately. The reason and use of this subdivision will become clear later on, and this first Essay will be more readily understood when later Essays have been read.

I will first give my definitions of the terms to be used in these Essays, and then return to the subject of faith as defined.

1. "Faith" is the fundamental attitude of a man towards life and things in general. When this faith is expressed in words it is "The proposition implied in the course of conduct to which he, in genuine desire, commits himself."

This definition is of prime importance, and I shall presently explain how it is reached and exactly what it means.

2. A "belief" is a proposition, explicit or implicit, resulting from the interaction of this faith with facts.

3. A "creed" is a system of beliefs proffered by some external authority.

4. "Opinion" is the logical conclusion from evidence presented.

5. "Logical conviction" is opinion based on sufficient evidence.

6. "Conviction," or "psychological conviction," is a mental state of freedom from doubt.

These last two should accompany each other; if they do not an undue diffidence or "cocksureness" will result.

My contentions in these Essays are that faith as defined is the most fundamental thing according to Christianity, and that Christian faith may exist independently of opinion; that Christian faith reacting on the indisputable facts of life produces the fundamental Christian beliefs; that at least the main lines of Christian creed are valuable adjuvants for the enriching of these beliefs; and therefore that it is well for a man in the period of interregnum to maintain Christian habits of thought and practice until he is qualified to form an opinion. There the proper function of the book ends, but two Essays are added, dealing with the anti-Christian systems very shortly, with a view to helping the reader to set about forming his opinions free from an oppressive sense that really after all it is all up with Christianity; that the intellectual agnosticism of this stage may be a *pure* agnosticism; that the opening of the mind to new ideas may not tacitly close it to the old.

To return now to the definition of faith. Every voluntary act, every purpose, requires for its logical justification some one or more propositions. One of these asserts the desirability of the result, another

usually asserts its possibility. I do not mean that these are consciously formulated as the ground of the action, in the great bulk of cases they are implied only ; but the fact remains that every proposed action implies some proposition. If now we look at any but an absolutely erratic life we find that a large number of actions imply a common proposition, and when a man's life is "consistent," that means that under all his actions lies some one proposition. It is this proposition and the attitude of mind that it formulates to which I restrict the term "faith."

There is however one further consideration. A man's conduct may swerve from its usual consistency, and do so repeatedly under similar circumstances, and what are we to say then ? The answer depends on the man's mental attitude towards these inconsistencies. If he approves and admits them, then the proposition underlying them must be incorporated with that underlying his usual conduct as an excepting clause in the formulation of his faith. But if he sincerely disapproves, if the exceptions occur "in spite of himself," they must be reckoned as due to external causes, in which case it is the consistent purpose that is to be formulated in the faith. (Of course I am now speaking of volition and purpose in the purely *prima facie*, popular way of daily usage. Questions of responsibility and freedom are discussed in Chapter XII.)

A simple illustration will make this and the whole

subject here discussed clearer. Suppose a man to buy cheap boots instead of expensive ones, and under a variety of circumstances, cheap clothes, cheap furniture, and everything cheap. Each purchase would imply that, under the circumstances, the cheaper thing was preferable to the dearer. The consistent series of cheap purchases would imply that he considered the cheaper thing to be preferred under all circumstances. This statement would formulate his commercial faith; it might be derived from elaborate considerations of economic theories, or be simply an idiosyncrasy, perhaps an unconscious one. Now suppose that to this there were some regular exceptions, that whenever he bought wines he always bought the best qualities. This might be due to an irresistible preference for good wines overriding his usual economy, a tendency deplored and resisted, but in vain; or it might be due to an intentional modification of his usual principle. In the first case his commercial faith would be unchanged, according to our definition; in the second we should have to restate it and say, "Cheaper things are to be preferred to dearer, except wines." (Possibly even the preference for dearer wines might be the cause of the other economies. In that case the faith would be "Dear wines are preferable to other forms of comfort," and the proposition about other cheaper goods being preferable would be a *belief* due to the interaction of the desire for good wines with the extraneous fact of

a limited income; this by way of illustration of a "belief.")

The distinction I have drawn is between inconsistencies due to want of will and to weakness of will; it is not of much moment here except as explaining the introduction of the words "in genuine desire" into the definition.

From these considerations we reach the definition, "A man's faith is the proposition (or propositions), explicit or implicit, involved in the course of conduct to which he, in genuine desire, commits himself."

Now I must emphasize the fact that the origin of this proposition is not determined in the definition. It may be derived from a consideration of evidence or it may be independent of it. It may be adopted arbitrarily; most commonly it is not consciously formulated at all. But in almost every case it contains a statement of the value set on a certain object by the man himself. This will all be clearer when we narrow the subject down to a special type of faith; for the moment it is enough to observe that

1. All consistent conduct implies a faith.
2. This faith nearly always includes an estimate of relative values.
3. It has no necessary connection with evidence.

And from these we may get an alternative definition, and say that "Faith is the assumption underlying the course of conduct to which a man chooses to commit himself."



I now drop the consideration of faith in general and turn exclusively to the faith implicit in the desire to do right. This desire and this faith I assume to be already entertained by the reader. It is beyond the scope of this book to try and instil it. I only propose to start from that and help it to find its articulation in the Christian creed.

Now as to this faith in "the good," the question at once arises, Are we justified in holding on to it in the face of opposing evidence? We have seen that it is possible to do so, but is it morally justifiable?

In the first place it is a good thing to realise that we must necessarily hold *some* faith. Even a purely erratic existence implies the proposition that inconsistency is preferable to consistency. And this is not merely an academic quibble; it brings home the fact that we cannot even in the interregnum avoid identifying ourselves with some principle; and if so, why not deliberately choose the highest we know?

The two objections commonly raised are that this attitude encourages credulity and is disloyal to truth.

To the first objection we can oppose a direct denial. We have separated opinion from faith, and we are, with open eyes, assuming, not asserting. Indeed by this very attitude we have done all that can be done to remove personal bias from our subsequent investigation of facts.

The second charge requires careful consideration. It might claim some weight if we were taking an

arbitrary assumption for our faith without any heed to moral values. Even so it would be difficult to show what right truth, *in the sense here used*, could have to control our conduct. All the more when our chosen guide is morality have we the right to challenge actuality to prove itself moral before claiming an allegiance from our conduct. For here again a popular use of the word Truth is confusing the issue. "Truth" commonly has a moral connotation, and disloyalty to truth carries a stigma of immorality; but here truth merely means "the actual" and may be non-moral or immoral. If truth be non-moral or immoral, could we be charged with immorality for choosing to follow morality? If it were proved that this was a devil's world, would it be wrong to do right? On the other hand, if the actual proves itself moral, then there is no real antagonism, and any apparent antagonism is due to a defective perception of morality, or of fact. In that case during the intellectual diffidence of the interregnum we are at least as likely to go right by following our moral ideals as we should be in trying to adapt our conduct to our continually modifying intellectual conceptions of the universe.

Therefore I think we are morally justified in choosing to follow the highest and to maintain as our faith the propositions involved in this conduct, whatever conclusions about the universe may be forced on us by evidence presented to our intellects.

The rest of this section will be engaged in unfolding the content of these propositions and showing how they are related to Christian faith, but it must be clearly understood that all that is derived from faith has its roots in choice and assumption, and its expression in conduct. In this first section opinion is left out entirely. In the second section I discuss opinion in the abstract and in its relation to Christianity.

But before closing this essay on Faith, let us just see whether this kind of faith forms a recognised element in Christian faith; if so, we may hope we are on the right lines to an answer to the question of our interregnum relation to Christianity.

Take the classical definition in Hebrews xi. 1, where the writer is emphasizing the fundamental solidarity of Christian faith with that inspiring the lives of the pre-Christian saints: "Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων," "Faith is giving substance to things *hoped for*, putting to the test (putting one's weight on) things not seen." Here undoubtedly the essence of faith is said to be a voluntary course of conduct, based on definite choice; though the thing chosen is not represented as doubtful or improbable, still even here the difficulty of giving proof of its existence is recognised in the words οὐ βλεπομένων.

Again, see St John vii. 17, where recognition of the origin of Jesus' teaching is spoken of as following on a

choice to do God's will. Here again choice is spoken of as a sufficient basis and as an essential element of all Christian faith.

It is hardly necessary to recall the insistence of Christianity on the necessity of a conduct-expression for faith, without which it is declared to be dead.

~~And indeed~~ I think it is clear that all religious faith, if it is to be worth anything, must rest finally on choice and be able to maintain itself in face of hostile evidence. The point is beautifully illustrated in one of R. L. Stevenson's "Fables," called "Faith, Half-faith and No-faith-at-all," in which three men, going on a pilgrimage, discuss the grounds of faith. One, a priest, bases his faith on miracles, another, a "virtuous person," on metaphysics; the third, "an old rover with his axe," says nothing at all. "At last one came running and told them all was lost; that the powers of darkness had besieged the Heavenly Mansions, that Odin was to die and evil triumph.

'I have been grossly deceived,' cried the virtuous person.

'All is lost now,' said the priest.

'I wonder if it is too late to make it up with the devil?' said the virtuous person.

'Oh, I hope not,' said the priest, 'and at any rate, we can but try. But what are you doing with your axe?' says he to the rover.

'I am off to die with Odin,' said the rover."

## CHAPTER II

### FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Matt. xxii. 32.

Surely there is a sequel, and thy hope shall not be cut off.

Prov. xxiii. 18. R.V.M.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,  
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm  
and the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,  
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:  
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

TENNYSON. *Wages.*

WE must now consider the propositions implicit in this faith in the good, and these, together with others resulting from the interaction of our faith with the indisputable facts of life, will form a system of beliefs. Further, these beliefs will provide us with an *a priori* attitude towards alleged historical events, which may make all the difference to our judgment upon them. But throughout this process it must be clearly remembered that the conclusions reached are entirely dependent on our original chosen assumption; they form the concrete, particular expression of our faith

in relation to the facts of life, and are therefore wholly or partly independent of evidence. This is at once their strength and their weakness; their strength in that the essence of them cannot be upset by hostile evidence, their weakness in that they have no value as "opinions" until and unless the fundamental faith underlying them all has been logically justified by evidence. Like faith, a belief must bear, directly or indirectly, on conduct.

One other point; a belief owes its place in the system to its logical connection with the faith, and has value only as an expression of it. If the logical connection be faulty, the belief loses its right to a place; but clearly it will first have lost its value.

Let us be quite clear as to the argument here. The point is that if we are justified in making our original assumption the basis of conduct, then we are justified in acting on any proposition logically derived from it, alone, or in conjunction with proved facts. These propositions are beliefs.

Three groups of beliefs will form the subject of this and the next two Essays: 1. Those derived from the proposition of our faith, and its realisation in face of the facts of life; 2. Those derived from the presence of "genuine desire" as an element in faith; and 3. Those derived from the effect of our faith on the value of historical evidence.

The proposition of our faith is an estimate of relative

values. "I purpose to be guided by 'the good'," means that "the good" is preferable to "the not good." Three propositions are implied in this purpose.

1. Good is preferable to not good.
2. I can recognise good, and accomplish it.
3. Good conduct results in success.

Put shortly, "The moral sense is valid, objectively and practically." It is to be trusted,—trusted in the reality of its distinctions, and in its practical utility. Its assertion of duty is not to be permanently vitiated by defects in my moral judgment. And it may be trusted to produce a life in some way less waste than it would otherwise be.

It will make this clearer if I anticipate the argument of Section 2 and use the analogy of the rational sense as an illustration. Argument in itself implies the proposition that the rational sense is valid, in exactly the same way. It is ridiculous to reason about anything unless

1. Reason is preferable to unreason.
2. I can recognise reason.
3. Reasoned thought results in truth.

Any argument whatsoever implies all these three. For this reason they can never be proved, for the argument to prove them implies their assumption. Therefore all reasoning rests on a choice to assume the validity and practical utility of the rational sense—a choice which no amount of experience of bad



reasoning and discrepancy between fact and reasoned expectation, and proven defects in the rational judgment of individuals, nations and centuries can avail to shake.

Note the difference between a "sense" and a "judgment." The rational sense asserts that there is such a thing as reason and non-reason, the rational judgment pronounces whether a particular statement is reasonable or not. The human race is well aware of the fallibility of the *judgment*, but clings to its belief in the validity of the *sense*, and also trusts the judgment sufficiently to give practical value to the sense. In the main it trusts the judgment and looks for a progressive improvement therein. Our faith here treats the moral sense, of right and wrong and duty, in exactly the same way.

Now these propositions imply certain propositions concerning the universe, the "not-ourselves." Taking the *prima facie* aspect of things, every action is a co-operation between ourselves and the not-ourselves. That moral action should be more "successful" than immoral or non-moral implies a preferential reaction on the part of the not-ourselves. Thus we reach the proposition:—"The universe has a preferential action in favour of morality," or, "The universe takes cognisance of moral distinctions."

This proposition gives us an *a priori* attitude towards the indubitable facts of life, and from it flows



another proposition. Our faith supposes goodness to be always worth while; it attributes to the universe the power to bring righteousness to success. But one of the most obvious facts in life, one which has weighed heavily on all nations at all ages, is the apparent failure of righteousness to produce success. Moderate morality is apparently of some use, but high degrees of morality (as displayed by reformers and prophets) almost invariably lead to temporal trouble; while villainy often needs only a thick hide to ensure happiness and temporal success. Then comes death to equalise all. And though it may be said that "success" does not necessarily connote the comfort of the individual, and that the triumph of his cause and the progress of morality is success enough, yet undoubtedly in many cases an individual could produce a larger effect on the world by a bad life than by an obscure good one; so if "success" is to be measured by effect on the world, the preferableness of the good is not particularly obvious; while the futility of reckoning the praise of posterity etc. as a reward is well shown in Robert Browning's "Cleon."

All this predisposes us to accept the solution hinted at ages ago by Job in a passage in which this problem is set forth with marvellous vividness and force. The skulking adulterer and the murderer are portrayed<sup>1</sup>, and the oppressors of the poor; and their prosperity and honour in life, old age, comfortable deaths and

<sup>1</sup> Job, ch. xxiv.

well attended funerals<sup>1</sup> are contrasted with the misery that sometimes befell the righteous. The old traditional "bad end" of the wicked is shown to be false to fact; and to the suggestion that the righteous profit in the end by their sufferings, he replies that correction ending in death is of no value. Then, in a passage of wonderful pathos, he suggests what he dare not hope, that *if* after this life there were scope to practise what had been so painfully learnt:

"O that Thou wouldest hide me in Sheol, that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me! (if a man die, shall he live again?). All the days of my warfare would I wait till my release should come. Thou shouldst call, and I would answer Thee; Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of Thine hands<sup>2</sup>."

The solution that Job longed for we may accept. It is a rational deduction from our faith when applied to the facts of life. Further on, when we have considered other beliefs, the argument for the inclusion of immortality in our system will appear more cogent. Even at this stage it is difficult to conceive any other sufficient meaning for the word "success."

Meanwhile we may note that the hope of immortality and its inclusion as an independent "faith" modifying our original one—the arbitrary adoption of it as an essential element of "success"—may be justified on purely mathematical grounds, as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Job, ch. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Job, ch. xiv. 13—15.

The science of probabilities teaches us that "the finite chance of the infinite however small is worth more than the finite chance of the finite however great." In other words, the value of a ticket in a lottery whose prize was truly of infinite value would be greater than any nameable sum, provided that the number of tickets was finite. This means that so long as there remains the remotest chance of an infinite value for life, we are logically justified in sacrificing all finite possessions for that chance.

I labour this point, for it is of importance. Since our faith is an individual matter and involves really *individual* success in proposition 3, it seems to me that immortality offers the only solution to the problem offered by life and death; yet, not liking to dogmatise too definitely as to the nature of "success," I am here proposing that the belief in immortality be independently "adopted" into the faith. It may then be said, "Why not at once adopt the whole of Christianity as your fundamental assumption?" To which I reply that unless the choice of a guide for conduct can be justified on moral grounds, the charge of immorality in being disloyal to fact is less easily refuted, especially as we are already assuming the moral nature of things. Therefore this assumption of immortality not being obviously of a moral nature, needs logical justification. Since however there is mathematical proof that only absolutely conclusive antagonistic evidence can

make it wise to abandon this choice, we cannot be accused of being untrue to fact in adopting it unless it can be absolutely proved to be impossible.

This belief in immortality, or rather in the possibility of it for righteousness, will necessarily affect conduct, for in efforts for the good of others we shall not rest content with providing material comforts and aims only, but any social work we may undertake will have a transcendental element in it.

I think therefore we are justified in formulating the proposition that "Goodness leads to immortality." Personally I think that our original assumption involves this necessarily. Even if there be still hesitation in deducing this from the primary proposition, it will become obviously necessary after the introduction of one or two more steps.

Under the present heading, there still remain a group of beliefs which emerge from the conflict between the assumed possibility of accomplishing the good and the experience of inability which is universally attested. But it is easier to defer this group to the Essay on the Christian Creed (Chapter VI.), and then take it in the reverse direction; examining first the articles of the Christian creed and seeing whether their essence forms an integral part of our beliefs. We shall recognise this group as expressed in the Christian doctrines of forgiveness and the Spirit.

## CHAPTER III

### ADJUVANT BELIEFS

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?  
By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.

Psalm cxix. 9.

More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of.

TENNYSON. *The Passing of Arthur.*

WE have now to discuss the implications of the "genuine desire" to follow good. This means that we shall leave no stone unturned in our attempts to perfect our ideal and to realise it in conduct. Anything that has a reasonable claim to be considered helpful will be tried. Such aids I term adjuvants.

Certain adjuvants obviously owe their efficacy to their appeal to special temperaments; others, equally clearly, are of universal application. These universal adjuvants must be utilised by all who genuinely desire to follow the good; the more special and peculiar ones will be tried if special need seems to arise.

Chief among these universal adjuvants are :

1. The anthropomorphic figure in thinking of the universe.
2. The practice of Bible reading.
3. Prayer.

#### 4. Association with others in religion.

(Even if the mode of action be intrinsically the same as that of the more limited "psychological adjuvants," yet their almost universal applicability is in itself testimony to a psychological fact whose explanation is of cosmic importance.)

The testimony of the value of these is so universal that it is unnecessary to support it by argument. Logical justification alone is required to secure their adoption. Note, however, that logic is not employed to prove them necessary but only to sanction their voluntary introduction. We choose to express our faith in this way because it is known to be a valuable way. We could even dispense with the sanction of logic, but if we can have it so much the better, as it enables us to build further. The importance of minimising the amount of assumption will be apparent later, when we reach Section 2.

I think the anthropomorphic figure receives a complete justification from the usage of mathematics. The objection to its use is, of course, that to ascribe finite, human attributes to the Infinite is to give what we know must be a false picture. To this I reply that a "no-picture," or a picture of mechanism or something lower than human, is necessarily still more false, but is our only alternative. Hegel teaches us that the idea of definite quality is a nearer approach to reality than that of Pure Being, which if rigidly conceived cannot

be distinguished from Pure Nothing. Now, in mathematics the introduction of a true infinity at once upsets all calculations; so, for purposes of calculation, infinity,  $\infty$ , is defined as "*A finite number, greater than any nameable number.*" With this infinity calculations are carried out, and the finite results obtained are correct, justifying the process. Notice that this result is obtained by leaving to infinity the known attributes of numbers, and expressly depriving it of the very attribute of infinity. Without this device—and its logical basis is hard to understand—many problems would simply be left unsolved. Surely this is a warrant for a strictly analogous process in another region of thought? May we not hope, by the help of the anthropomorphic figure, to solve successfully problems of finite human life that must else be left untouched?

Combining this adjuvant proposition, "The anthropomorphic figure is of value in thinking of the universe," with our other proposition, "The universe takes cognisance of moral values," we arrive at the idea of the Government of the world by a good Spirit, and this idea we propose to adopt, as a helpful and justifiable expression of the essence of the faith we have chosen.

The same idea may be reached more directly, but as the argument is more elaborate, and elaboration of argument is ruled out in the interregnum, I put it second. It may be asserted that that which can be cognisant of moral distinctions can only be properly

described by us as Spirit, since we know nothing else such. If we find a heap of stones with all the white ones put together, we conclude that some agent susceptible to whiteness has been at work, unless there is evidence that the white stones have some other special quality in common, such as shape, weight, etc. Such susceptibility to whiteness may under certain circumstances be fairly called "sight," though its "inner" aspect may be totally different from sight as we know it. For in truth there is no such thing as sight as *we* know it. I know nothing of the inner aspect of your sight. I only know that you react to light in the same way as I do, and conclude, though no proof is or can be offered, that your life has an inner side resembling mine. All one's ideas of a friend's mind must be "automorphic." I see his behaviour and picture to myself the states of consciousness which in me would accompany such actions. This picture I project into him. Such automorphism, unproved though it be, is more useful (and we all opine that it is more true) than a language and terminology that sticks strictly to observed fact. So too, the reactions of the universe are all we can know, truly; but if those reactions suggest to us the picture of accompanying mental states, and especially if we do not know of such reactions occurring without accompanying mental states, surely it is more useful and probably more true, to use automorphic terms to describe the universe? Indeed



the weight of logic is in our favour in doing so; for at the bottom of all reasoning that is more than tautology lies the principle "Whatever has any mark has that which it is a mark of<sup>1</sup>." Undoubtedly in our experience reaction to moral values is a mark of humanness. It is from this that we deduce the spiritual nature of other men, and not from their physical characters. If then the universe has this mark, we may logically ascribe to it the spiritual nature of which it is a mark.

The question of associated non-moral qualities as a sufficient cause for this reaction is considered again in Section 2. These more elaborate justifications are inserted here to lighten the task of that Section.

Meanwhile, by one road or the other, we have arrived at the idea of a good Spirit ruling the world.

The practice of prayer follows so naturally on this, and moreover its utility is so universally attested, that we can pass it lightly, merely remarking that telepathy does not explain all the recorded phenomena of prayer, nor would prayer be proved valueless or the existence of God disproved if it did. We should note also that an essential element of prayer is "outwardness." Prayer prayed with the conscious and deliberate aim of reacting on one's own mind is not true prayer<sup>2</sup>. To adopt

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill, *Logic* (Silver Library, 1900 edition, p. 119).

<sup>2</sup> It is well always to remember that fact is usually more complex than our analyses of it; also that the rational faculty is one only

true prayer, then, as an adjuvant is to imply another link between man and the universe, and further justifies the anthropomorphic figure. Or, on the other hand, if the anthropomorphic figure is already adopted, prayer is a natural corollary.

Of Bible reading, much will be said in the next Essay; and the fifth Essay, on Creed, deals with the value of religious association and its practice. Of Bible reading, suffice it to say that no one keen on correcting and raising his ideals can afford to neglect it and the many directions for the attainment of holiness that it contains. Even taken as a record of the spiritual experience of the spiritual geniuses of the world, it is a book of unique value which no amount of criticism should make us ignore, nor should the miraculous element, were the common objection to that never so well founded, lead us to reject it.

That the miraculous element in it is not a conclusive argument for excluding even its historical statements from our beliefs; that to us the miracles themselves are acceptable, forms the subject of the next Essay.

of many reactions to fact. Therefore to substitute some scientific theory of prayer in our minds for the idea of prayer itself which has done so much in the world is like substituting a sodium light for daylight in a picture gallery.

## CHAPTER IV

### ACCESSORY BELIEFS

To me perhaps the rising of one from the dead were no violation of these Laws, but a confirmation; were some far deeper Law now first penetrated into....The course of Nature's phases...is partially known to us, but who knows what deeper courses these depend on; what infinitely larger Cycle (of causes) our little epicycle revolves on? To the Minnow every cranny and pebble and quality and accident of its little native Creek may have become familiar: but does the Minnow understand the Ocean Tides and periodic Currents, the Trade-Winds and Monsoons and Moon's Eclipses, by all which the condition of its little Creek is regulated? CARLYLE. *Sartor Resartus*.

WE come now to a group of beliefs arising from the interaction of our faith and fundamental beliefs with historical events and narratives; and especially with the group of narratives constituting the evidence for the historical basis of the Christian gospel. What is to be our attitude to this? From the standpoint of our faith, is it probable or improbable, or does the miraculous element in it make it all unworthy of credit? Is the miraculous element itself absolutely incredible, as it is often said to be?

Let us consider first the nature of the objection to the miraculous. It is not merely that a miracle is said to be impossible, as violating a Law of Nature; that

objection can be met by asking what these Laws of Nature are, and pointing out that there is no guarantee of their absolute continuity to be found in experience. The objection goes deeper than that, and professes to base itself on the foundations of all organised knowledge. According to this view, natural laws are the expression of a large mass of experience, and all knowledge rests on the assumption that uniformity of experience is probable in proportion to past recorded uniformity. Now, resurrection from the dead (or any other unique exception to an uniform experience) is *per se* highly improbable; in its favour we have only testimony, and it is not contrary to experience that testimony should be false or mistaken. Therefore it is always more probable that the evidence for a miracle is fallacious than that the miracle itself should have occurred. This is Hume's great argument. According to this argument, therefore, a miracle is and must always be incredible; not impossible, but incredible, which means probably not true, or highly "improbable," unprovable. And this point gives us a clue to the weak point of the position. Science can only recognise the proven as true. To the present day *science* cannot speak of measles or smallpox as microbic diseases with certainty, since the microbes have not yet been demonstrated. To science they are *probably* microbic; for practice they are *certainly* so, and in all practice we act as if we knew we were trying to kill a microbe. Now this

doctrine of Hume's merely demonstrates a high degree of scientific improbability, which is totally different from impossibility. However, even so we have a serious objection to face, but one that diminishes very much on consideration of the nature of testimony; for while, in the abstract, testimony is often false, we are not dealing with testimony in the abstract, but with the testimony of certain individuals; and deliberate falsehood in such men with such consequences is quite as contrary to experience as any miracle. And indeed it will be seen at once that too rigorous an application of Hume's doctrine would produce an absolutely unprogressive science. Its canon would be closed and would claim an infallibility beyond that of any Bible, Church or Pope. No new law could ever be announced, as unlimited error would be more probable than an exception to the old laws. As a fact, science is not closed. The discoveries of the Curies, at first thought to be opposed to one of the very broadest based generalizations of science, the conservation of energy, were none the less accepted on adequate testimony. So we see even science may recognise testimony as sufficient to establish the probability of a new fact in the universe.

Now it is acknowledged pretty widely that the existence of the Gospels is exceedingly hard to explain. Theories of deliberate false statement find no acceptance, and other theories accounting for the statements of the apostles by hallucination, growth of tradition, etc., are

practically only accepted as a *pis aller*, because the truth of the statements is supposed to be incredible. It must of course be freely admitted that the testimony for the Resurrection is different in quality from that for radio-activity, but the principle remains the same, that the improbability of the event testified to decreases in proportion to the difficulty of impeaching the testimony.

Even so it may be doubted whether the testimony available would be enough to overcome the improbability of a resurrection; but there is yet one other element to be considered—the most important, and yet the most commonly overlooked,—and that is the *a priori probability or improbability of the thing testified, having regard to the circumstances at the time*. To use a very mundane illustration; if a small boy said he had seen a horse walking on its hind legs, we should not believe him. Romancing small boys are common, and biped horses are rare. If we knew that this particular boy was peculiarly prosaic, we should give more serious attention to his assertion; but if we discovered that he had just been to a circus, we should see at once that his statement was almost certainly true. This shows how local circumstances may affect *a priori* probability, and this in turn affect credibility.

To apply this to our present instance. A miracle in the last analysis is nothing but an unique occurrence, and, as such, points to the presence of an

unique cause, or an unique collocation of common causes. The first balloon ascent was due to the collocation, for the first time, of the action of dense air on rarefied air with the action of ropes (from the envelope) on the car. The ropes had supported the car before, and cold air had displaced hot air before, but never before had these happened together. That was a "man-made miracle," often since repeated. "Universe-made miracles" differ in that man cannot manipulate the causes and so repeat the effects; but if there is reason to suspect the presence of an unique cause or collocation of causes, an unique effect, so far from being incredible, becomes probable in proportion to the strength of the reason; and comparatively little testimony is needed to establish it.

From our belief we derive the proposition that "the universe takes cognisance of moral significances"; without doubt the gospel period has proved to be an occasion of unique moral significance; therefore from our belief it follows that there is good reason to expect an unique reaction to this. This *a priori* presumption is met by solid testimony to events which, though unique, fit admirably as corroboration of what we already believe concerning God and man; consequently to us as holding these beliefs the Gospel story becomes fully credible.

It must be observed, however, that this credibility rests fundamentally on our belief, and thus the Gospel



story finds its place in our beliefs. For opinion we have as yet no judgment on it. On the other hand the story rests for us partly on testimony, and so far partakes of the nature of opinion. For this reason I call such beliefs "accessory," not because they are not cardinal and vital, but because they are derived from our faith by the incorporation of a disputable, external element. Supposing on the opinion side the gospel story were to break down utterly, suppose every line were proved beyond dispute to be a forgery, the result of a compromise between mystic Jews and Indian Buddhists, then the narrative would forfeit its place in our belief indeed, but our belief would still look for, and if found, welcome an embodiment in history of itself, in events testifying to the moral nature of the universe and the transcendental value of spiritual things. For while our belief does not perhaps warrant our prophesying that such a revelation must occur, it surely makes it probable, and certainly more than makes it credible, when attested.

The outcome of this is that we find in the Gospel history and in doctrines duly deduced therefrom an embodiment of our faith. It is plain that the main outlines of the Gospel, the holiness of God, the claim of holiness on man, and the resurrection, coincide with our beliefs. We shall have to see presently whether the other elements also find a place there and whether we find anything in Christianity contrary to our faith.



The discussion of these points belongs to the following Essays on Creed and the Christian Creed.

Two points must be made clear before passing on. Firstly it may be said that we might "adopt" the gospel story without any evidence or testimony, or even if these were against it altogether. To this I say that it is possible perhaps to do so, but it is, as before, difficult to refute the charge of immorality if we disregard evidence unless the guide for conduct chosen in defiance of opinion be chosen *on moral grounds*. If we merely adopt so much of the story as may voice our beliefs, it is perhaps permissible, but of little value. And this leads to the second point; of what value is it to incorporate this narrative into our beliefs? To the Christian it may seem that we are too subjective, and are trying to measure out the gospel according to our preconceived ideas; to the non-Christian that we are weighting ourselves with an unnecessary burden. To the former I reply, "Not at all. We are prepared to go the whole length in accepting the consequences of this step. Any doctrine that can fairly prove its claim to be a deduction from the facts of this story and that directly or indirectly affects conduct shall also command our obedience; unless indeed we should after careful and reverent and sympathetic weighing conclude that it does not truly make for the highest conduct. In that case, and if it really is a necessary element of the gospel story, we shall be forced to reject the whole. If

you complain now that we are after all measuring the gospel by our moral judgment, I say that if *I* am to accept it at all it must be either because it commends itself to *my* moral or *my* rational judgment; through whatever by-paths of authority, *I* am necessarily my own final court of appeal. And if I for the present prefer the right as I see it to the reasonable as I see it, can I be blamed? especially by those who would repudiate the name 'rationalist'?"

On the other hand I object most strongly to the idea that nothing is gained, and that the historical narrative is unimportant to us. Apart from the value of a corroboration<sup>2</sup> of our beliefs, there is the much needed enlightenment and training of the spiritual faculties only to be gained by the experience of subjection to the gospel standards and ideals. This subject will be further expanded in the next Essays; but most important of all, it must never be forgotten that not only do we derive the comforts of corroboration from

<sup>1</sup> I am anxious that this point should be clear. If we here test Christianity by our own beliefs and not *vice versa*, this by no means implies that our beliefs are to measure what we will accept. It is simply that starting from the elementary faith of the interregnum we are looking for a religion embodying that faith. If Christianity does this, we then propose to study its teaching in the spirit of disciples. We are seeking our beliefs in it simply as one looks for the hallmark on a thing claiming to be silver, and being assured of the genuineness of the silver the hallmark is of no further importance. Neither is a knowledge of the hallmark of any value by itself; it is the silver that wears it that makes it valuable.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, p. 136.

objective history, but apart from that history, and apart from the spiritual objective facts that it reveals, our faith has no power to produce the success for which it sacrifices all else. To use theological terms, we shall not be saved simply by believing that God saves us unless there is actually a God willing and able to save us. The objective fact is one of infinite value, and it is a great gain to us that our faith should warrant, as its corollary, the acceptance of an objective element into our beliefs, an element which I consider in the present state of the controversy can only lose its place in our belief by abandoning our faith in the good altogether.

The importance of this conclusion will be more evident when we reach the section on Opinion. Meanwhile, we have seen that our faith warrants our accepting as a basis of conduct the essentials of the Christian creed. In the next two Essays we shall discuss the advantages of a creed and its limitations and disadvantages; and examine the Christian creed to see whether it includes, as essential, anything not deducible from our faith or anything opposed to it. I believe we could have built up from our faith alone, confronted by various facts of experience, other than historical, a system of beliefs identical with all the main elements of Christianity (lacking, of course, their objectivity and objective corroboration); but it seems simpler to take these ready made as a creed and see if they are convertible into beliefs, and this is what we must do in the following Essays.

## CHAPTER V

### CREED

So to study the old as to acquire the new is the path to proficiency.

CONFUCIUS. *Analects.*

Formulas too, as we call them, have a *reality* in Human Life. They are real as the very *skin* and *muscular tissue* of a Man's Life; and a most blessed indispensable thing, so long as they have *vitality* withal, and are a *living* skin and tissue to him! No man, or man's life, can go abroad and do business in the world without skin and tissues.

CARLYLE. *Past and Present.*

LET us remind ourselves of the nature of creed. It is a system of beliefs set up by someone outside myself. If I can use its formulae to express my faith, then the creed has become a belief. If I can erect my beliefs into a system, that may become to someone else a creed. Creed therefore is the medium of communication of beliefs. (If logically proved, either belief or creed may become opinion or even conviction.) The object of adopting a creed is to convert it into belief, and a creed has only religious value in so far as it is so converted. Hence too it follows that no article of a creed is of religious value, or can be, unless it can influence conduct.

From these considerations it is easy to see the defects and advantages of creed compared with belief, and to get an idea of the caution to be exercised in adopting a creed.

The defects chiefly arise from the fact that a creed expresses the thoughts of another, often so differently circumstanced that the language and expressions used have lost for us many of their connotations. In other instances, doctrines have been developed from the interaction of his beliefs with facts then unquestioned but now disputed or discredited. There is danger too of resting content with profession of a creed without the serious attempt to convert it into beliefs; or of mistaking it for opinion and asserting it as such. These dangers show clearly that a creed must be adopted with caution and critically, to avoid dangers of anachronism and formalism. One must also be continually on the watch lest some hitherto unrecognised implication of a doctrine be found to clash with our other beliefs. At the same time, it must always be remembered that it is one thing to set aside a doctrine as unimportant and another to negate it.

Furthermore, a creed is composed of the same elements as a belief. It has a fundamental proposition, deductions from this, and accessories derived from the interaction of these fundamentals with facts of life and of history; also adjuvants, doctrines facilitating the realisation of these ideals.

The following seem to me to be the more important rules and cautions to be observed in adopting a creed.

1. No doctrine is of importance religiously unless directly or indirectly it has an actual or potential bearing on conduct.

2. In adopting any doctrine as a belief, unless its connection with our faith is clear, we are committing our conduct to the moral judgment of another. It is exceedingly important to recognise this and to make sure that that other is qualified by superior moral excellence to guide us.

3. In its essentials, creed is of the same spiritual value as the authority whence it comes, but in accessories the opinion of the man or his age also forms a factor.

That is to say the practical ideals of the creed are of fundamental importance, and must either voice ours or commend themselves to us directly or through the spiritual authority of the founders of the creed. Then :

4. All deductions derive their value from their logical implication in the premisses, and may be unimportant in themselves; but the negation of them may be fatal to the essential whence they are derived.

5. Adjuvant doctrines are valuable if they are logically implied in the success of the practices they inspire. If not, the practice alone is important.

6. At the same time a purely psychological explanation of the effect of such a doctrine, when that effect is universal, does not invalidate that doctrine or deductions from it about the universe.

For example suppose prayer, inspired by the doctrine of a God able to hear prayer, were proved to be allied to telepathy or autohypnotism; still, if it be universally true that prayer under certain conditions receives answer, that fact testifies to a specific element in the constitution of things; and since all our language about the universe is figurative, the old doctrine remains unaffected by the new discovery.

God is Law, say the wise; O soul, and let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by Law the thunder is yet His voice<sup>1</sup>.

It comes to this, then, that we select a creed in essentials commending itself to us, and therefore embodying our beliefs; that we examine with reverence its doctrines and endeavour to incorporate the root-ideas in our belief when they spring truly from the central ideal and develop it or aid in its realisation. We are not to commit ourselves wholesale to every detail, but to dig to the root of each doctrine. Some may be set aside as not fully understood or as unimportant, many may need a restatement; but any doctrines that enrich our ideas of the goodness of God, the desirability of the good, or that elevate our moral

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, *Higher Pantheism*.



ideals or enable us to realise them more fully, will be of value to us.

A few rules about the treatment of doctrines that seem to us unimportant may be advisable, for, as already said, it is important not to confuse disregard with denial. It is not wise to negate a doctrine in a creed of high spiritual authority unless it is fully understood and

1. seen to be connected with its conduct-significance by false logic,
2. the fact on which it is partly based is proved false,
3. it clearly involves some consequences clashing with an essential of our belief, or of the creed itself,
4. the valuable part can be better restated.

With these cautions and provisions and with our eyes wide open to the possible dangers lurking in creeds, we shall find that the adoption of a creed becomes an adjuvant of great value; for in the very element that constitutes its weakness, there lies the possibility of great advantage. Creed truly comes from others, but if the valuable part can be made our own, we can reap infinite benefit from this very fact. The historic doctrines are venerable, not merely because they are old, but because they represent the experience of the spiritual geniuses of the world, men of many temperaments and ages, but real, living, flesh and blood men, faced with perennially recurring difficulties



and problems, now in one form, now in another, but mostly much the same as those we meet with to-day. This is more specially true the nearer we get to the original Christian doctrines, which were struck out from the hearts of earnest men trying to meet the real with the ideal. Subsequent formulations of these, for all their dry-bones air, represent a genuine effort to summarise the practical experiences of the Church, when it had been proved that this or that version of a doctrine lent itself to deductions with a deleterious effect on conduct; and though we meet with many absurd extravagances woven by monk logicians far removed from real life, we can usually see that the extravagance is derived from some imported element of opinion since discredited. Wherefore we should not be childish enough to be deterred by old-fashioned figure and language. Our thought and language, vital enough to us now, will be classed with these by succeeding generations.

Not only does creed convey to us the spiritual experience of past ages, it also acts as a language of communication of spiritual experience with our contemporaries, and it is for that reason that I urge the value of it particularly; let us get such an insight into the meaning of doctrines and their identity with our beliefs that we can use "their great language" to convey our ideals to others without a thought of cant, and receive their impressions in the same way. The

value of such a fellowship to a man in the interregnum can hardly be over-estimated, and it is because so many are cut off from this by a fear of canting or a lack of sympathy with others who have not felt intellectual difficulties that I am so keen on the importance of learning to clothe one's beliefs in conventional forms for the sake of communication. All conventions have their drawbacks. Science has its conventional language, which has played havoc with much of the thought of the age. The damage done by the phrase "Laws of Nature" misunderstood is comparable to anything in the history of religious language. Therefore I maintain that with proper precautions and a constant effort to realise the meaning of phrases used in one's own conduct, a sympathetic association with men of a fundamentally similar aim, undisturbed by cavillings at phraseology, can be kept up with a very great profit to both, and should form part of the programme of anyone truly anxious to realise the highest ideals.

I have anticipated somewhat in assuming that Christianity will prove to be the creed for us. I have already shown that it is reasonably open to us; it remains to show that it embodies our faith and chief beliefs, that its ideals are the highest we can know of, that its other essential doctrines link on to the fundamentals by a logical process and that it contains no doctrines opposed to these. The difficulties of Christianity in reconciling itself with other

facts of life will be treated of under the heading of "Opinion," and certain of the moral difficulties will also be deferred till we come to the anti-Christian systems founded on these difficulties. For the present we shall confine ourselves to the main lines only, for within Christianity at the present day there is no lack of latitude on points non-essential.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHRISTIAN CREED

He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.

Proverbs xxviii. 13.

The subject of the Old Testament, *Salvation by Righteousness*, the subject of the New, *Righteousness by Jesus Christ*.

MATTHEW ARNOLD. *Literature and Dogma*.  
(Preface to popular edition, 1883.)

O trysting-place, where heavenly Love  
And heavenly Justice meet.

ELIZABETH C. CLEPHANE.

BEFORE adopting Christianity as our creed we must answer three questions:—

1. Does it include our faith and beliefs?
2. Does it include as essential anything not related to these?
3. Does it include anything at variance with them?

By adopting it as our creed we mean that

1. So far as we understand it we are already desirous of living as we should if we knew it to be true.

2. We propose to develop our moral faculties in the light of its teachings, following its authorities on the ground of their spirituality; not blindly, but with

the respect due to their spiritual eminence and experience.

3. We propose to make trial of its adjuvants to help us to realise our ideals in practice.

Now to answer these questions.

To the first we could answer "Yes" without further discussion, except that persons will be found who dispute the moral ideals of Christianity.

To this in a state of interregnum no final answer can be given: it is a question of judgment of experts; on the other hand for a starting point at any rate we may assume the Christian ideals to be the highest attainable. Attacks on them usually take one of two lines; either their basis, in a belief in God, is attacked, or they are said to be too much or too little selfish. Attacks on the basis do not any longer concern us now; and for me at least the outstanding example, of Christ Himself, is sufficient proof that any indictment of Christianity as weakly sentimental or selfishly interested must rest on a misconception. True, *my* success is involved in my holiness, but that holiness is expressly defined as a love for others; and St Paul was prepared to forfeit his own share in that "success" if that could have been of any use to his fellows<sup>1</sup>. But why pretend indifference to a transcendental joy whose attainment hurts no one, but which can only be reached through unselfishness, and to forgo which would benefit

<sup>1</sup> Romans ix. 3.

no one? I cannot but think that the Christ-ideal is high enough for any man to pursue without detriment, at least until he is sure of a better; and we are prepared to keep our eyes open for defects in our creed if they should turn up.

Taking then the "Christ-ideal" as equal to "the highest," we certainly find that Christianity includes our faith, for its fundamental proposition for conduct is the claim of holiness; and cosmologically, its fundamental proposition is "God is love"; which with reference to our "success" becomes "All things work together for good to them that love God<sup>1</sup>." In these our fundamental propositions are theologically expressed.

The answer to the second question demands a fuller consideration. At first sight Christianity seems to insist on much that is not relevant to our faith and beliefs. Chief among these are doctrines of forgiveness and atonement, of salvation, of faith in a different sense from ours (at least apparently), and of the Divinity of Christ.

These really on examination will be found to be pertinent to our beliefs. I hope it will be clearly understood that I speak in a technical sense when I call these doctrines "accessory." I do not for one moment mean to cast any slur on their vital importance. I mean only that they are derived partly from the fundamental central proposition and partly

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii. 28.

from other facts of life and history. The abstract idea, for example, of being in England does not of itself include any notion of travelling, much less of a steam-boat. Couple with it the fact that I am in Peking as I write, and the notion of a boat becomes cardinal. For the realisation of it an actual concrete boat is vital. So too the central Christian proposition does not involve these doctrines, much less the realities to which they refer; but they become cardinally necessary when that faith is faced with certain *impasses* of life, in the way in which we saw the fact of death elicited the hope of immortality from our fundamental faith.

It will be simplest to take a summary of the bare outlines of Christian doctrines drawn from a study of the four Gospels and the New Testament generally. It will now be clear why they are arranged in a peculiar manner beginning from a generality and going on to more particular elements. I am simply following the same line as we followed in developing our beliefs.

1. There is a life which leads to "success," "permanent result"; spoken of as the "aeonic life," "salvation," etc.

2. The possession of this aeonic life is "salvation."

3. Ultimate salvation (heaven, the kingdom to be, salvation), is only to be partaken of by the holy.

4. Therefore salvation is to come *via* holiness.

Thus far our essentials are expressed. Next come a series of propositions arising from the combination of this with our own observed defects—sin. Since I am not holy, am I debarred from salvation? Christianity opposes its faith in the love of God to this conclusion and asserts that

5. Through the love of God, we are not debarred from hoping for salvation in spite of failure, on certain conditions.

6. The possibility of salvation on these conditions is no more a reward of merit but a free gift to man from God's love. (This really follows on 5, but the emphasis is different.)

For us the acceptance of these two propositions needs only that we admit our own imperfection. From this admission our faith and beliefs deduce them.

7. These conditions are confession, repentance and faith (in the Christian sense).

It is plainly impossible to advance without an admission of defect and a desire to rectify it; the aim at improvement involves these. And the desire to rectify a moral defect, a defect of will, is *μετάνοια*.

Faith in the Christian sense will be readily seen to be fundamentally identical with "faith" in our own sense, only particularised by application to special difficulties and to special concepts. Fundamentally it is just the proposition that holiness is worth pursuit. Applied to the *impasse* of our own sin as a barrier to



salvation it becomes a "looking away from self<sup>1</sup>," it is then faith as opposed to sight. We see nothing in our past experience of ourselves to warrant a hope that it is of any use for us to pursue holiness, yet we pursue. Faith is therefore involved in the determination to pursue undeterred by failure. In relation to a living God, from Whose love we derive our hope of salvation in spite of sin, it becomes a personal relation of trust and obedience and an aim at progressive identification of will.

For ourselves it seems clear enough that these three steps are involved in the pursuit of holiness after the experience of failure; but Christianity promises further that

8. In response to faith the conduct shall progressively approximate to that holiness which never ceases to be necessary to salvation<sup>2</sup>.

I insert this as a special paragraph because it makes clear that something more is contained in Christian faith than merely struggling on in spite of failure. It implies a real hope of ultimate attainment. This indeed follows on our beliefs in God and His love of holiness, but Christianity lays so much stress on the importance of a definite reliance on God, as rather

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Abraham, quoted in Romans iv. 19 as a type of Christian faith.

<sup>2</sup> This is the essence of the doctrine of the Spirit. See Appendix B, p. 138.

*opposed* to frantic efforts, that I think it would be hardly fair to subsume it as involved in the effort. Faith of this kind is a conscious psychological counterpart of the logical statement of our faith in relation to a loving God, and it finds its place in our system as an adjuvant, a psychological adjuvant of universal application. It is an observed fact, testified to by generations of Christians, that this attitude of mind leads to moral success when others fail. That this fact has its counterparts in other realms of psychological experience, that it may be explained by theories of subconscious action, in no way invalidates it. Practically it is of value, and logically it is the logical attitude of mind consequent on our propositions. Its effectiveness may be charted down as a natural law, but in the anthropomorphic figure "natural law" is "God's way."

I think this analysis fairly represents Christian faith, and shows that each element has a place in our beliefs, and that the necessity of confession, repentance and faith may be fairly incorporated from the Christian creed into our beliefs; but since some may be met with who say that this insistence on reliance on God is unnecessary and undermines self-reliance, it may be well to elaborate this analysis a little further. As this involves the question of the Christian view of the relation of God to man, it will be better treated in the Essay on Determinism in Part II.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. pp. 118 f.

In these propositions may be recognised the essence of the doctrine of forgiveness of sin, but we have yet to consider an important group of doctrines which connects these all with Jesus, the doctrines of the Atonement, of salvation through Christ alone, and of the Divinity of Christ. Before passing on to these, let us sum up Christian creed thus far. Salvation through holiness is attainable, a life of love has an eternal value and significance. The barriers of defects of conduct and power are not insuperable, nor is the frustration of life by physical death. The intellectual adoption of these propositions saves a man's view of life from futility, their adoption in purpose saves his aim, in practice the life itself.

The realisation of these propositions in the person of Jesus has often been objected to as too localising and a debasing of the Christian idea. Let us see then exactly what the New Testament does say about the connection of salvation with Christ. Let us take three typical pronouncements.

"There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans x. 9).

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (2 Cor. v. 19).

As to the first it is clear enough that it is a statement of plain fact. If any man's name<sup>1</sup> under heaven is essential to the attainment of holiness it is His; certainly there is no other. The second sentence explains more fully what "believing on" Him means, and we find it is a deliberate acknowledgement of His Mastership and a heart belief, i.e. a belief in the life, that God raised Him. We have already seen that faith involves a belief that physical death will not render life futile. With the evidence before them, at least in those uncritical days, the resurrection of Christ was only to be denied on grounds of its impossibility (as, implicitly, by the Corinthians)<sup>2</sup>. Therefore to disbelieve this in the life simply meant to live as if this life were all; to believe it in the life meant to live for eternal aims, and St Paul states that salvation depends on living for eternal aims under the Mastership of Jesus. For us it means the same, and for us pursuit of the highest means discipleship of Jesus, identification with Him in aim and attitude and life, which is the true meaning of "union with Him by faith," "believing into His name."

The third one raises the question of the relation of Jesus to God. This is more a question for the theologian than for me, but I wish to say a few things that may help to a clearer view. We have already seen that the Gospel story is credible to us. If, as orthodox

<sup>1</sup> i.e. voluntary identification with Him.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians xv. 12, 13.

theologians say, the Divinity of the Messiah is a logical corollary of this story, the point is proved for us. There can be no doubt that the Messianic idea by the time of our Lord had compounded distinct ideas of the Old Testament, the Divinely appointed Prince and the ideal Servant. In these the idea of the personal coming of Jehovah was sometimes included. Jesus claimed to fulfil the Messianic idea and claimed a place of special relation to God, of higher dignity than the greatest of the prophets, and called Himself *the* Son of God in a special sense, as being the direct and perfect representative of God's character to man. He also claimed that by His death He remitted or caused to be remitted the sins of many. Lotze says, "If therefore reverence for the founder of our religion designates him as 'Son of God,' no serious objection to the essential thought which is expressed by this term is...tenable; it is even without doubt legitimate to regard the relation in which he stood to God as absolutely unique not only as to degree but also as to its essential quality<sup>1</sup>."

It seems therefore that we need not hesitate to admit the claim of Jesus to the title Son of God in these senses, as the fulfiller of the Messianic idea, with all its implications, and as One Whose relation to God was unique and Who represented His character to man. But the Christian doctrine commonly held has further

<sup>1</sup> Lotze, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, ch. x. § 89.

ideas in it. It maintains that in some way the experience of Jesus represents the experience of God, and His activities the activities of God. These ideas find their culmination in the doctrine of the Atonement.

For us the essential question is, Has this doctrine a religious value? That is, Does it influence conduct directly, or indirectly by exalting our ideals of God and holiness? If this is answered in the affirmative, it is not necessary for us, at this stage at least, to be able to give a theory or to assent to one or another of those current<sup>1</sup>. For the uncertainty in intellectual matters, which is the essence of the interregnum, here comes as something of a relief, and we can well afford to leave undecided questions on which experts give different opinions, while still retaining their right to the name Christian. And such theories belong to the class of doctrines that derive their importance solely from their logical connection with another doctrine of religious value intrinsically. It may be unwise to negate them, but it is in no wise essential to affirm them, as long as the valuable doctrine they profess to explain is recognised. This attitude has, indeed, the countenance of some of the most orthodox representative bodies of Christians to-day. One friend of mine, when he was asked his theory of the Atonement by the

<sup>1</sup> A patient need only believe that an operation is necessary and effectual. If he acts on this belief he need not understand the theory of the operation.

committee of one of the leading Missionary Societies, replied that a young man like himself could not be expected to hold formed opinions on a matter so much in debate. The committee satisfied themselves that he assented to the doctrine itself, and accepted him, and he has worked for many years in India under that Society.

There is, however, a deeper reason why we may be content to hold the doctrine even though it may seem impossible to attach any precise meaning to the ideas involved when such ideas relate to God. I lay stress on this reason because it is one which frequent abuse has brought into discredit; and yet it has a perfectly legitimate scope. To use theological language, we are here in the presence of a "mystery." Now, we are *not* at liberty to multiply incomprehensible statements about God and justify them in this way. The claim this particular doctrine has on our acceptance, if any, rests on its religious value. Even so it could not be justified in its obscurer implications, unless there were good reason shown why it should necessarily become obscure at these points. In other words the obscurity must be shown to be inherent in some other idea involved in these implications. The difficulty of giving an exact meaning to the doctrine of Atonement lies in the impossibility of comprehending the notion of the self-sacrifice of God. So long as we keep to the anthropomorphic figure there is no special difficulty; but when we ask what this figure corresponds to in the



actual reality underlying that figure, we can form no idea at all. But we see that at this point we have introduced the incommensurable factor of the "real infinity," and from the mathematical analogy we should expect to get an indeterminate result. This does not mean that the idea is invalid, but only that we cannot comprehend it. For our finite purposes the "finite-infinite" of calculation is perfectly valid; and again mathematics teaches us that neither infinity nor zero are qualityless, though we cannot trace their qualities. Mathematicians talk about the gradient of a line and the algebraic condition which it always satisfies in the case of an obtuse or acute angle whether or not in the geometrical sense the angles have ceased to exist. The points representing these angles when they are geometrically non-existent are indistinguishable from each other and without magnitude, but from the algebraic formula the potential nature of each can be told; it still has quality though no quantity. Thus, too, though in extending it beyond the anthropomorphic figure the idea of self-sacrifice has passed beyond our ken, there is no reason for denying its validity; rather the lines which we can see are guarantee for the nature of the unseen.

With these preliminary remarks it remains for us to see whether the doctrine of the Atonement has a religious value. Does our religion gain by including or lose by denying it?



I think in two ways it is a great gain to religion. First, it deepens the idea of forgiveness. This idea, beautiful though it be, has in it a suspicion of denying its own origin. It is included because of the importance of holiness; but if breaches of holiness can be readily set aside the question may well arise whether it is quite so important after all. It is not uncommon for anti-Christian propaganda to attack the idea of forgiveness as immoral. But when sin is represented as not merely forgiven but forgiven after atonement, after its reality has been in some way or another fully "met," this objection vanishes. There is thus a permanent validity in the notion of sacrifice.

But there is still an objection to the morality of the procedure so long as atonement is represented as the work of a third, be he never so willing. This objection is one which is often heard, and one which can only be answered, I think, in the Christian way, by representing God Himself as Himself paying the penalty. To this there can be no objection on moral grounds. Sin is given its fullest possible weight, and no innocent third person is called in to meet it.

It is by no breath,

Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death.

And this is one of a number of instances in which Christian doctrine seems to me to stand alone in doing full justice to contrary ideals in the human mind;

almost in a Hegelian manner the two "moments" issue in a synthesis. One cannot help feeling a sympathy with Whitman's outburst of approval of the peaceful animals who do not lie awake groaning over their sins; one cannot also withhold assent from Tennyson when he says:

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes<sup>1</sup>.

The doctrine of the Atonement unites these instinctive ideals; not, be it observed, by proposing a compromise, or a middle course, but by giving at once the fullest possible weight to the grievousness of sin that the most morbid conscience could imagine, but also justifying the most radiant joy in communion with God ever experienced by the most ecstatic of the mystics. Christianity offers many such combinations, for example the "ambition to be unselfish," to mention one only.

There is yet another way in which this doctrine not only exalts our idea of God, but seems almost logically necessary if we are to entertain the proposition "God is Love" at all. These arguments are beautifully put in Robert Browning's *Saul*, which I quote below. The point is that if self-sacrificing love were possible to man, and not possible to God, then man not God

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, Canto xxvii.

would be the highest ideal, and to him should our worship be directed. The deduction would be that Jesus is more to be worshipped than God, unless we can admit that the Cross in some sense is a demonstration of the self-sacrificing love of God whereby sin is dealt with. In the following lines David is singing to Saul when the evil spirit is on him. He has sung of the joys of life and fame, without result. At last, overborne with pity at the sight of such sad failure, so much fair promise unfulfilled, he breaks out into a great cry of impotent longing to restore him.

Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,  
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing which  
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!  
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou—So wilt  
Thou!

So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—  
And Thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave, up nor down,  
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,  
Turn of eye, wave of hand that salvation joins issue with death!  
As Thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved  
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!  
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the  
most weak.

'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I  
seek

In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be  
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me  
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand  
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ  
stand!

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHRISTIAN CREED (*continued*)

The new and lofty idea of the after life has arisen, not from the old animistic conceptions, but amid their ruins.

CHARLES. *Eschatology.*

BEFORE concluding this section, we have still to answer the question whether Christianity contains anything at variance with itself. This practically resolves itself into a question whether Christianity contains any doctrines of an immoral nature. Charges of immorality are made against Christianity; some of these we have already seen to be unfounded, and due to mistaken conceptions of Christianity, but there is still one important one to be dealt with.

The doctrines of punishment of the impenitent are for various reasons assailed. Those attacks which depend on the question of free will will be best considered in the Essay on that subject in Part 2. The rest resolve themselves into two. First, the doctrine of eternal torment is attacked, and second the idea of punishment for some and redemption for others is said to be an unjust one.

As to the former, we may first take advantage again of a cleavage of opinion among Christians to leave the question open ; but I think we may go further and deny to this doctrine any legitimate place in the Christian scheme. It appears to me to come within the class of doctrines whose basis is now seen to be unsound. The basis of the doctrine appears to be a crude uncritical metaphysic, finding no support in Christianity ; and the doctrine is violently extracted from a few texts to fit in with this metaphysic<sup>1</sup>.

To justify these assertions. Many of us were taught in our childhood that the body was perishable but the soul imperishable. The reason given for this statement was that it was possible to cut and otherwise injure the body, but the mind being immaterial was beyond the reach of any known weapon of destruction. In consequence of this idea, immortality was supposed to be the necessary property of all souls, and the question was whether this immortality was to be blissful or miserable. Even conceding this immortality to all souls, it would not have been necessary to suppose punishment to be an active unhappiness ; a relative loss of capacity would have been enough, but for the coupling of this with certain texts. The chief of these are the description of hell as a lake of fire, the words of Christ about the unquenchable flame and the undying worm, His parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and

<sup>1</sup> But see Appendix C, p. 141.

one passage in Revelation in which the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet are said to be tormented for ever. Other passages in Revelation which at first sight may seem to support the doctrine do not actually do so. Let us examine these passages, apart from any presupposition of the undyingness of the soul.

The parable of Lazarus is so obviously couched in popular language as to make any support for this doctrine drawn from it quite invalid. The conversation between Abraham, with Lazarus in his bosom, and the rich man, is plainly not to be taken as an actual picture of the occurrences after this life.

The other words of Christ, interpreted in the light of the current Jewish idea of Gehenna as a rubbish heap for the burning of waste, and in the light of the original passage in Isaiah<sup>1</sup>, plainly point to nothing but the destruction of those who allow anything to interfere with wholehearted devotion. In the original passage the undying worm and unquenched flame are spoken of in conjunction with the *carcases* of offenders. The memorial is permanent, not the torment. This too is the natural explanation of the meaning of a lake of fire. Concerning human beings, it is only said that "the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever<sup>2</sup>"; the same exactly is said<sup>3</sup> of Babylon *after her complete destruction*<sup>4</sup>. Elsewhere human offenders are described

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lxvi. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. xix. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xiv. 9—11.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xviii. 21.

as being slain with the sword<sup>1</sup>, an idea that admits of no possible interpretation as an everlasting torment. The lake of fire is expressly described as the second death<sup>2</sup>, and perpetual torment in it is predicted only of three highly allegorical personifications<sup>1</sup>. Elsewhere we find that Death and Hades<sup>2</sup> are cast into it. The idea of tormenting these is obviously absurd, and the whole picture presented in chapters xxi. and xxii. is so incompatible with the presence of people in torment, that we may safely say that no such thing is seriously intended. Rather let us take the truly scriptural view that the Eternal Life is the gift of God, and the alternative is death<sup>3</sup>.

Whether or no these arguments carry conviction, I think it is at least clear that this doctrine cannot claim to be so essential that Christianity must stand or fall by it; but it is still open to the objection that a differential treatment of mankind is unfair. The force of this objection lies mainly in the connection of it with predestination; this will be considered later. Apart from this, and if it be allowed that all men are free to choose their actions, the alternative assertion that all men should, by following their own choice, attain an equal degree of bliss is scarcely worth considering. No

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xix. 20, 21, xx. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xx. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Notice too that Jesus' argument for a resurrection rests on the idea of spiritual contact with God being incompatible with extinction. Mark xii. 26, 27.



one would seriously charge God with unfairness for making animals with different life histories ; and if the element of torment is excluded, there can be no real objection to the idea of a spiritual loss (connoted by the word eternal) incurred by those who do not care for eternal gain. Whether or no there be an eternal hope lying behind all this idea of reward and punishment is another question. The principle underlying it will be touched on in the Essay on Determinism. For the present we are only concerned with charges of immorality against recognised doctrines.

Now, except for the consideration of a few questions deferred to the Essay on Determinism, our main work is finished. We have seen that for one in the inter-regnum it is most certainly possible, permissible and desirable that he should still be in faith, belief and creed, Christian. But because opinion has so strong an influence on a man's life, and because the inter-regnum is only a temporary state for most of us, and because even so there is great danger of being unduly impressed by the more insistent systems of the day, I propose to add a series of essays dealing with opinion and some of the intellectual objections to Christianity, and substitutes for it. But it must be realised that I still maintain that we may, if we choose, be Christians in defiance of all but absolutely conclusive evidence to the contrary ; and also that the aim of these next essays is not to overthrow these anti-Christian systems and



settle in a few pages the problems of centuries, but only to disperse the imposing atmosphere of finality and general infallibility with which some of them have been invested in the popular literature and imagination. If Christianity raises some problems, so do they; and even were we to be guided by the very questionable assertion that a majority of scientists of eminence are anti-Christian, still we should probably find a yet greater majority opposed to materialism or anyone of the various alternatives. It is therefore in order that we may approach these things with a truly open mind,—open to argument, but freed from undue awe,—that I very briefly point out the recognised objections to these systems and the answers to the more serious and impressive intellectual objections to Christianity. My object is, not to close the questions in favour of Christianity but to maintain a truly open door. If I can leave the reader convinced that for him the question is not finally settled against Christianity that will be enough.

In concluding this first Part let us revise what we have got, and see if it be truly deserving of the name of Christianity. We have already examined the objection that our creed is subjective, and shown that we recognise fully that it will avail us nothing apart from the objects to which it attaches us. But lest some should think that we have laid too much stress on the less important points to the neglect of the more

important, or that we have been too liberal in our outline of Christian doctrine and our avowed intention of criticising it, let us see whether our method would commend itself to Christ, and whether He would—(may we not say, will?)—accept a faith such as ours.

We find that the great fault that He finds with the Pharisees and men of His time is want of spiritual discrimination; moreover, though He refers them to the Scriptures in correction of their ideas, He has no hesitation in ranking one Scripture as of lower moral standard than another<sup>1</sup>, or in abrogating a whole system when its object has been attained<sup>2</sup>. Not only so, but He is astonished that His disciples have not yet learnt to do the same<sup>3</sup>.

Throughout the fourth Gospel He often appeals to their judgment of His actions to support His claims, and invites criticism<sup>4</sup>; and He expressly places the will to do right as a preliminary qualification for accepting His teaching<sup>5</sup>. (Compare with this the doctrine of faith and its implications in Hebrews xi. 1 and 6, and see Hebrews v. 9, 10, where the failure to exercise the moral judgment is represented as the cause of adoption of non-Christian doctrines. St Paul and St John in their epistles also urge the criticism of doctrines in accordance with moral and spiritual standards.)

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Mark vii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Mark vii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> John v. 36, vi. 6, vii. 24, viii. 46, x. 38.

<sup>5</sup> John vii. 17.

Christ Himself, then, sanctions a discipleship consisting primarily of moral sympathy with the highest, and states that the consequence of such discipleship with the free use of the moral judgment will be a ratification of His claims. It is an exceedingly interesting study to trace out His gradual training of men at first attached to Him in this way, and to see how their entirely alien connotations were gradually purged from the idea of His Mission, and the true spiritual elements of Messiahship gradually introduced to them. For us the important point to be noted is that the supreme implications were the latest taught, and that the apostles were even sent out to preach before they had reached the point of intelligent confession of His Messiahship, and long before the ideas of Atonement or even of a suffering Christ had come home to them. All this I take to be a sufficient sanction for this method of looking on Christianity as an edifice from broad simple moral bases, through various corollaries up to its crowning doctrines<sup>1</sup>. And with this agree the experiences of a writer on mission work in India who says, "A belief in the Divinity of Christ, in the sense in which Christians understand the words, will come not as a primary impression, nor as the result of

<sup>1</sup> Professor Charles in *Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish and Christian*, traces the historical origin of some Christian concepts from the conquest of old pagan Semitic ideas by the logical implication of the most fundamental doctrine of Judaism, the righteousness of Jehovah.

dogmatic teaching, but as the final outcome of spiritual experience." I, for one, have no doubt that a discipleship of this kind will prove the gate to a spiritual experience of an undeniable kind that even when strictly criticised in the light of psychological and other sciences, must have a very considerable weight as positive testimony even towards influencing opinion on this matter.

So we propose to put ourselves under the guidance of Christ and the apostles to help us to a more effectual fulfilment of our faith; to endeavour to grasp the ideas that inspired them and to follow the practices that helped them. We choose them because we find their teaching embodies the highest we know already, and has inspired lives far nobler than our own; and while we cannot as yet understand or see the force of many of the things they say, we know it would be folly hastily to reject it all for that reason. Miracles when they have a religious value we accept; when we do not see such value we can leave them for the present and with them all doctrines of theoretical importance only, especially those that are still in question among Christians. And if we avowedly base our position on choice and make as yet no profession of an intellectual conviction for which we are not yet qualified (though we do not impugn the right of those who have examined the question to an opinion, and ourselves purpose to proceed to enquiry), we are therein simply

recognising that in this matter there is a great IF and taking our stand deliberately on the Christian side of it. The most "assured" Christian can do no more, and we need not fear to lose anything by being honest. If Christianity be true we shall infallibly come to know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, and if it be not true, no amount of subjective assurance will make it so. There is then nothing left for us but "to die with Odin<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D, p. 143.

## PART II

### CHAPTER VIII

#### OPINION AND THE FAITH

Every plant which My heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Matt. xv. 13.

The grand question still remains, Was the judgment just? If unjust, it will not and cannot get harbour for itself or continue to have footing in this Universe, which was made by other than One Unjust. CARLYLE, *Past and Present*.

It is not my purpose to discuss the nature of evidence and opinion at any great length. The laws of evidence can be found in text books on logic. I intend rather to indicate the outlines of the theological vindication of Christianity, to discuss one or two of the typical objections to it, to criticise the more important anti-Christian systems and to offer a few thoughts on the place of opinion in life, especially with regard to teaching and preaching.

We have seen that the essence of Christianity is a logical outcome of a faith in the moral sense, and that this faith provides also the *a priori* presumption necessary to make the historical evidence of Christianity adequate. I now put forward *as a logical proposition*

the assertion that the moral sense has an equal claim to confidence with the rational sense. Notice I do not say it is trustworthy. Either or neither may be trustworthy so far as this proposition is concerned. I only say that no one can logically claim validity for the rational sense while denying it to the moral sense.

In the following discussion, I shall assume that natural selection in one or another form accounts for all characters of organisms; and my point is that the two senses have parallel origins, similar characters, and identical objections to face.

To begin with, the rational sense itself repudiates itself as the sole judge of truth. By its own showing it is only a recently and imperfectly articulate section of a large number of reactions to the universe. On many matters it can only pronounce its own inability to judge. Other similar reactions exist along with it, and have also partly articulated their "judgments" into codes and laws. Like the moral judgment, the rational judgment has varied widely in different ages and places. One generation's verdict has often been overthrown by the succeeding generation. In short, the moral and rational senses and judgments form a pair alike in all essentials. The trustworthiness of neither can be demonstrated; it must be assumed. The very argumentation by which one would seek to establish the validity of reasoning must assume it. Universally assumed it is, since no thinking could

progress without it, and man is irresistibly impelled to believe in thought. Just so with the moral sense; and my claim is that the one assumption, which has been at the base of our structure hitherto, must be admitted as reasonable in virtue of the very act of reasoning by which an opponent would attack it, since that act is involving a precisely similar assumption.

This is so important (for I conceive that all religious apologetic must finally rest here), that it will be worth while to examine two criticisms that at first sight appear to weaken this position.

It may be said that the verifiable nature of reasoning gives it a superior authority to morality. To this I reply in two ways: first, that morality too is verifiable, and secondly, that we are now discussing the validity of reasoning as a guide to regions as yet unverifiable.

Morality is "verifiable" within limits, in other words morality can often be shown to lead to success as reason to truth. "Honesty is the best policy" is proverbial; and in larger spheres we may find the Psalmists prophesying the triumph of right on the strength of the moral sense alone, and against all appearances, a triumph which has to a large extent come to pass in our day. But if in transcendent matters morality cannot yet be seen to profit, so truly the higher ranges of reasoning often appear directly injurious to the reasoner; for if the martyr suffers, the philosopher is notoriously unpractical. Moreover,



many things at the present day turn out contrary to reasoned expectation, but we do not therefore reject reason. Rather we plead insufficient knowledge and defective observation, and hypostatise causes to account for the variation; and we shall continue to do so though disappointed again and again, rather than distrust reason. The like procedure is perfectly legitimate in the moral sphere and no more deserves opprobrious charges of "hedging" or "cooking" in the one case than in the other. Thus the faith we repose in reasoning, even when experience seems to give the lie to it, may be extended to morality.

The second objection will need a more lengthy discussion. It may be urged that reasoning is of value as between man and the inanimate universe, while morality comes into action only between sentient beings; and thus reason may appear more fundamental.

Our reply to this must involve a consideration of the methods of development of characters on Natural Selection principles.

A character is developed because it benefits the organism in conflict with

1. Natural forces.
2. Other organisms of the same or other kinds.
3. Others of its own sex for possession of the female.

To class 1 belong the instincts of building,

hibernating, etc.; to class 2 the combative mechanisms or superior adaptations for obtaining food, which latter are again direct adaptations to inanimate nature; to class 3 belong the sexual combative mechanisms and ornamentation.

Morality therefore must have been beneficial either in direct adaptation to nature, or in conflict with other organisms, or as commending its possessor to the females or possibly to the protection of the other members of the race. In the latter two cases is it less fundamental than in the former, that is, is it less directly derivable from the universe and less likely to correspond to something in its composition?

First we must remember that these things account only for the development, not for the origin of the character. The origin is relegated to "accidental variation," i.e. causes as yet unknown.

Then it is not strictly true that morality is entirely a social matter and therefore possibly a convention. Sloth and intemperance are individual, and are as disastrous to the individual as irrationality. The difference between reason and morality is thus only in degree; most rational acts benefit the individual in contact with inanimate nature, though many benefit him in dealings with his fellow men; most moral acts are social, but some are individual. But if we take the tribe as the unit instead of the individual, we see that the survival of morality

indicates in the moral tribe a superior adaptation to the universe; and survival thus means a co-operation of the universe, whether with the moral individual or the moral tribe. The correspondence is only removed one degree, from the individual to the tribe, but it is still a correspondence, and by the natural selection principle the conquest of the moral tribe is evidence of a superior adaptation to "Nature" in that tribe, which obliterates the distinction between classes 1 and 2. Further, we may see at once that in all probability rationality has survived in the same way, for it is the mass common sense of the nation that determines its survival in its dealings with other nations rather than the scientific acumen of the individual. With the reasoner as with the moralist, his ideas become effective for preservation of the nation in so far as they are absorbed into its common sense and influence its actions; it is the adaptation of the tribe rather than of the individual that has preserved rationality.

This leads us to the third class, in which a feature owes its survival to its attracting the favour of its own species, especially of the females. The ornaments of the male are of this class, but it is conceivable that a character, such as morality, should evoke the admiration and protection of the tribe, thus conducing to survival in times of danger. It is clear at once that to make such a method effective the instinct of

approval is as essential as the character itself. A peacock's tail would be useless to the peacock unless the peahen had a sense of beauty—a true aesthetic *sense*, whatever we may think of her *judgment*. The sense in the approver must co-operate with the thing in the approved. They are two parts of one tribal character, like an upper and lower jaw, and, as before, we have to seek the origin and survival of the whole in some fundamental correspondence with the universe.

The further suggestion that morality may owe its survival to an invariable association with some totally distinct beneficial character is of course equally applicable to reason, and does not affect our contention, which is that they have an equal claim to our confidence. I am not saying that either really does indicate a similar element in the universe; only that one cannot logically assume this for one and deny it for the other. But all philosophising rests on this assumption in the case of reason, therefore an anti-moral philosophy has undercut its own foundation.

But it will be said that, granted this contention, the claim made for the rational sense is merely that it corresponds to something fundamental in the *method* of the universe. The universe taken as a whole, statically, may be wholly irrational. We cannot guarantee an "end in view," nor, if we could, must that end be one which *man* would consider reasonable; much less can we infer a reasoning Governor

of the universe. Therefore, granting the moral sense and its equality with reason, you have yet to find any value in it for religion.

To the first objection, we can reply that in this case we are left with a duality of reason and unreason which is surely less satisfying philosophically than a conception of method as expression of essence. If we have a picture of the universe as reason wrestling with, and indeed absolutely directing, unreason, we have no explanation of the presence of that reason itself. The agnostic position that we have no means of deciding on such a point is discussed in a later Essay. Suffice it here that we observe this duality between method and essence, and that an unity is at least equally probable, and must be assumed in any further steps of philosophy through a consideration of reason and science beyond the agnostic position.

Secondly, admitting that method gives a clue to nature, must the end in view be such as man would think reasonable? I think a fallacy creeps in here through a new meaning for the word "reasonable." Hitherto it has referred to the link of cause and effect; in this place it means "desirable." Now, that which man with full understanding and full appreciation of all circumstances would desire surely is identical with his own true welfare? And to bring this about for man is the same thing as "loving" man in the practical sense. So that really a "reasonable end as man

would count reasonableness" is synonymous with a moral end. We make no suggestion that the rational sense would testify to a moral end; but we do suggest that the moral sense in filling this gap is as worthy of confidence as the rational sense in its own sphere. Whether moral method means moral end depends on our view of the question in the last paragraph.

But there are yet one or two considerations to be taken into account. In the first place, it is a common mistake to try to express an appreciation of the vastness of things by a belittling of man and his concerns. In truth this is but an extension of anthropomorphism in its defects. Important men are usually concerned only with the main lines of the affairs they have in hand, therefore details are supposed to be as it were beneath the notice of the universe. Added to this one often finds the philosophical folly of measuring importance by size or weight. Truly has it been said that the sun is a less thing than the mind of man which can comprehend it. This attitude is all the more intensely fatuous when introduced into Theistic systems; but even without that it is quite unwarrantable. The universe may or may not concern itself with man, but to argue that it cannot do so *because* it is big and important is sheer folly. It would enhance its dignity considerably to conceive of it as accurate and effective in every detail, however insignificant.

But besides this, the fact that lately threatened to



embarrass us now comes to our aid. If morality chiefly concerns one's activities towards sentient beings, then to postulate a moral "end" for the universe and yet to suppose that this moral end ignores the fate of sentient moral beings is a contradiction in terms.

The last question as to whether a moral method and end imply a moral Governor will be considered more fully in the next Essay; or rather we shall discuss briefly the steps from the one conception to the other. Here we may just remind ourselves that unless this concept is to be used as an argument in support of other concepts, it is enough practically to know that the universe will so behave as it would if it had a moral Governor. In other words, the internal metaphysics of the universe, *as an end in itself*, is not of practical importance.

We must carefully remember that we cannot in opinion deduce all the corollaries from our present proposition that we deduced from our faith, for there our primary proposition was that goodness is profitable *for me*; an individualistic element was present that can scarcely be justified beyond dispute by our present wider proposition of the validity of the moral sense, at least without an elaboration of argument that would be inadmissible in the interregnum and therefore out of place here<sup>1</sup>. Our present proposition was a deduction

<sup>1</sup> I am of opinion that this individualistic element can be justified *in opinion*, thus justifying in opinion the whole of our beliefs, but

from this, and the anthropomorphic figure was introduced as an adjuvant, being logically connected only with our "genuine desire," though its use was justified against attacks on its metaphysical validity. An argument connecting it with the validity of the moral sense was introduced—as I think, a sound one—but its full justification and support would again be too elaborate to be introduced here. In the next Essay I shall show how this proposition bears on Christianity (chiefly by creating *a priori* presumptions and justifying deductions from historical evidence); but for the present we must content ourselves with this much, that the existence of a moral sense affords a presumption in favour of believing morality to be a fundamental character of the universe, from which its ultimate action with respect to sentient moral beings may be deduced; and that this must be admitted by anyone attempting to philosophise about the nature of the universe beyond the stage of professing complete ignorance of its nature; in which case we have seen already that it is unreasonable to ignore practically even the least chance of an infinite value in life. Moreover we have this very important deduction, that any rational system which involves a

since the argument is intricate I am content to demonstrate a bare probability only. The scope of the Essays forbids more. The individualist element must then be introduced *viâ* the historical evidence for Christianity, viewed in the light of this *a priori* probability.



denial of the validity of the moral sense is less probable than one which admits both; and though it may be possibly true, there can always be erected a similar and opposite system starting from the moral sense and denying the rational, which will have an equal and counterbalancing likelihood.

I do not think that the majority of mankind will ever progress from general considerations beyond "probable" and "legitimate" in their opinion on Christianity. The function of opinion seems to me to be mainly to justify beliefs held fundamentally on choice as before; but I do hold that that choice can be abundantly justified as not only moral but logical—as logical as any alternative choice, *more* logical, at any rate, in the present state of the world's knowledge—certainly more logical than a definite denial would be, and infinitely more logical than neglect of the whole subject. It is now with this logical justification that we are concerned, though it is lawful to choose apart from the support of logic.

## CHAPTER IX

### OPINION AND CONDUCT

When in doubt, if we act and live as if our doubts were true, declension follows and our doubts become to us practical realities. But if we hold on to God, and live and act as if we knew they were not true, we emerge from the eclipse into light and peace.

HORACE BUSHNELL (quoted by A. T. Pierson, *Godly Self-Control*).

THUS far we have, I think, shown that it is reasonable to believe in a morality in the universe that is a probable guarantee of an "end" in which the welfare of man is not neglected. This, indeed, gives logical justification to our choice of our faith, and therefore we are *reasonable* in believing in Christianity. For we have seen now that it is reasonable to follow the least chance of an infinite value for life, that the existence of the moral sense offers us a "chance" that is far from infinitesimal, and that there is no sound metaphysical objection to our helping ourselves by expressing our hope concerning the universe in anthropomorphic terms. More than this, there is at least some reason to think that this figure is more truly applicable than any other to an universe "cognisant of moral distinctions."

But the rigid logical support of Christianity for opinion—even so resting still on an assumed<sup>1</sup> basis—must come from other sources. The soundness or otherwise of the evidence it will be the reader's duty to examine for himself later; I will here only state what I, as one of no special expert authority, but also one who has tried to form an independent judgment, conceive to be the state of the evidence to-day.

Looking at history we see the Jewish nation, through a most eventful history, again and again in danger of extermination, developing certain religious ideas, notably the Messianic idea and that of immortality for the righteous, and the Supreme Good God. These ideas doubtless developed gradually. The idea of immortality, for example, was not definitely formulated till late times; but very early there was the idea of a "sequel"—"surely there is a sequel"<sup>2</sup>—though the nature of that sequel was differently conceived at different ages. By the time of Christ the Messianic idea was so developed that the official religion saw nothing strange in ascribing to David language implying inferiority, and Messiah was a direct Representative of God to man. To a nation with such expectations, at almost the last possible minute, came Jesus, fulfilling

<sup>1</sup> But now seen to be in this respect on a par with the logical support of any proposition whatever.

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs xxiii. 18, R.V.M.

in a striking way their highest religious ideals, and claiming to be Messiah<sup>1</sup>. It must also be remembered that these Jewish religious ideas were not wholly peculiar to the race. All nations more or less shared the hope of a "sequel," and the multitude of religions, as well as Jewish prophecy, testifies to the widespread expectation of some communication from God to man. These expectations are evidence in favour of the proposition that an objective embodiment of a religious ideal such as ours is probable. This religious ideal was embodied in the life and character of Jesus; and then we have the testimony of His disciples to His corroboration of the great expectation of a "sequel." The testimony in brief is that sober, truth-loving men, who had been utterly dejected and almost demoralised by the crucifixion, became inexplicably a band of optimistic and ardent religious reformers. They themselves asserted that the cause was to be found in the fact that for forty days they had had frequent intimate intercourse with their Risen Master. They acknowledged the possibility of mistake and they said they would not believe it themselves on the testimony of their fellows, but subsequent interviews satisfied them absolutely. Later St Paul seriously refers questioners to the evidence of hundreds of living eye-witnesses. There is no serious dispute now about the date or authenticity of the letter in which he does so, and he refers in it to

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E, p. 146.

his past teaching on the subject. His letter was written about 25 years, and his teaching was given at Corinth about 22 years, after the event. We have record of his teaching in the same strain earlier. All four gospels were probably extant during the first century, the bulk of the synoptics certainly during the life of the original disciples. There is no serious doubt of the authenticity of the majority of the Pauline Epistles, the Gospels, the Acts and the first Epistle of St Peter. The Johannine Epistles undoubtedly came from the same pen as the fourth gospel, and the Diatessaron makes it highly probable that that gospel was issued with apostolic authority during St John's lifetime.

The strength of this combined evidence may be estimated by the extraordinary difficulties met with in proposing an alternative explanation of the apostles' change of attitude and indisputable conviction.

Lastly, we have the evidence of the Christian life of others and our own. This is the final testimony; other testimony merely serves to justify our interpreting this experience as evidence for things unseen.

To me these three lines of evidence, metaphysical, historical and experimental, form a very strong argument for the truth of Christianity; the one furnishing a presumption to prepare for the second, and these together interpreting the third. Each by itself can be attacked. We have seen that metaphysics leaves gaps in our conclusions; we can reach "probability" or

“validity”; history coming alone is strictly speaking inconclusive; personal experience may be susceptible of other interpretations than that of the reality of the objects of our subjectivity. But if Christianity be not true, each of these requires a separate explanation. The moral progress of the universe is unexplained, the origin of the gospel story is attributed to some form of illusion, and Christian experience to some other form of illusion. If the truth of Christianity be admitted, all three find one explanation; and “parsimony of causes” is a prime rule of reasoning; that is, that when one cause will suffice to explain phenomena, it is probably wrong to hypostatise more than one.

I cannot pursue the subject further. It is no part of my programme to “prove Christianity,” but only to show its reasonableness, and to indicate the lines along which an opinion favourable to Christianity may be reached. I have made several assertions of fact which really fall within the province of experts. Till you have investigated these for yourself the opinion expressed here is not yours but mine; and if on such investigation my statements or my logic are found faulty, then your opinion will be different, or, if the same, held on different grounds. It may perhaps be not out of place here just to state what degree of expert knowledge of fact I may claim for statements made in these Essays. My education has taken me into those regions of mathematics where infinity is used

in calculation, but to make sure that in statements of mathematical fact I have not blundered I have submitted all these to a professional mathematician. In theology and the history of the New Testament and all those controversies about authorship I have also taken a deep layman's interest, but the whole of these Essays have been revised from a theological standpoint by a professional theologian. This is to be held to authenticate my expressions of Christian doctrines as being within the limits of orthodoxy. The logic the reader himself must judge of and accept nothing on my bare assertion. My only claim to any degree of expertness lies in a twelve years' familiarity with natural science and its ideas; for in addition to the Natural Sciences course at Cambridge and qualification and practice in medicine, I have spent two years in the study and practice of the methods of scientific research and attended conferences of scientists, and know what are the methods of extension of knowledge and the criteria and standards of certainty required in scientific circles for the establishment of facts. In philosophy my interest again is that of an amateur, but I make few philosophical or metaphysical statements without giving the reasons for them, and in the following Essays my aim is not to give any final opinion on the systems discussed but to suggest considerations which may be followed up. I wish only to remove from the reader's mind any obsession by their *prima facie* plausibility or



widespread reputation; to show that they too have objections to meet even as Christianity has.

However, before passing on to these, I want to say a little first about assertion and conviction and kindred subjects. To some readers it may seem that before they can attain to an opinion on Christianity there is a long road of research and argument and discussion to be traversed, and meanwhile can they act as "believers," can they take part in teaching or preaching or any such Christian services? Especially does this question press on those who wish to be ordained.

Act as believers, most certainly they can. Belief is independent of opinion to a large extent, and if the first part of these Essays has been sound, then it is open to anyone truly desirous of following the highest to call himself Christian. And here I would urge the importance of "practical" conviction as an adjuvant; I mean conviction for purposes of conduct. I think one who has chosen to live according to our faith should resolutely banish the consciousness of intellectual doubt from times of devotion and action. Intellectually his mind may be open, but having decided that a certain course of action is right, no good can be done by dwelling on the possibility of mistake. This indeed is a general rule of all life, that the most efficient man is he who while seeing the force of his opponent's view is able to make up his own mind with decision. This warning, though obvious, is certainly necessary in actual



life, where too often it is left to the "cocksure" to do all the work and the talking, sometimes with disastrous results. And if you are not ever able to form a sound judgment of your own, no matter. It would be a calamity to be paralysed thereby. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." It need not, and should not offend, but we must see to it that it does not.

When we come to teaching and asserting, matters are a little different, but I offer the following considerations. Everyone has a right to assert his own opinion, provided that he does not assert as matters of personal knowledge things that really are not so. Under ordinary circumstances people understand that a man's assertions represent his own opinion, and attach as much or little weight to them as they think he deserves. It is when he claims special knowledge and authority that his opinions have special weight; in other words, when he sets up to be a teacher. Here again he is still at liberty to assert his opinions, they will be understood as such; but he must not try to assume a special degree of authority on a disputed point, unless personal investigation has qualified him to do so. He should frankly acknowledge what uncertainty he may have, with the exception of occasions of two kinds; when teaching elementary classes, and when preaching. In teaching elements it is always understood that you are providing a framework for the acquisition of formed knowledge later. No chemist

teaching the atomic theory to students new to the subject would enter into abstruse discussions of the various objections to it. To do so would produce an impression further from the truth than the theory itself. To elementary classes, therefore, I hold one may teach what one opines to be religious truth under the forms that convey it best without insistence on the possible objections to those forms. In preaching in a church a man and his audience are met on the understanding that the doctrine of that church is to be assumed as the basis of his discourse. Many of them have settled their difficulties years ago ; no one wants to hear about his. They require that the preacher apply that doctrine to practical life, not that he begin to talk about his opinions on it. And at any rate it is always open to him to carry out what I believe was the original idea of a sermon, to tell the stories of the good men of old and exhort his hearers to follow their examples. And so too in the various mission services, etc., that a student may wish to take part in ; even during the interregnum it will go hard but he can find something in his faith that he can wholeheartedly proclaim, the beauty of holiness, the disaster of sin, the practical experience of salvation.

It comes to this, then, that if a man wishes to become a teacher, he should strive, by personal investigation, to fit himself for the post ; this done, he may teach what he opines. In preaching he should respect

the assumptions under which he has his opportunity and avoid subjects where he cannot honestly express his opinion, in accordance with those conventions. Within those limits I think he may certainly assert without challenging himself any such opinion even though he be not very definitely decided on it. But of primary importance is it that he who sets out to teach about Christian experience should have first hand knowledge of it, and in this especially should there be no pretence to an authority which is not his.

One or two considerations as to the nature of opinion may help to make this matter clearer. An opinion is often the balance of two uncertainties. The objections to one opinion may be formidable, but those to an opposite opinion still more formidable. In this case the former should be reckoned as one's opinion; and it must be remembered that if "cocksureness" is giving undue weight to an ill-grounded opinion, then to give undue want of weight to a well investigated opinion is in truth cocksureness also, of a negative kind. A decision after careful investigation, even though the balance may seem but slight in its favour, is still a greater probability than the opposite, and to refuse to assert it is to over-assert its negative,—or at least is often equal to allowing it to be over-asserted by other less conscientious people. Secondly it must be remembered that by strict logical principles the degree of uncertainty affecting religious matters is also inherent

in most matters of history and everyday life, and it is unreasonable to suffer oneself to feel in one class an uncertainty we should scorn as pedantic in another. The tendency of the thoughtful man is usually to give undue weight to uncertainties in religion. If these facts be kept in mind, and a systematic effort be made to keep the psychological sense of assurance duly proportioned to the evidence obtained and the certainty attained, there will be no reasonable difficulty about teaching in most cases. These remarks of course cover the case of those wishing to take orders; if on due investigation they form an opinion distinctly unfavourable to Christianity they should not take them; though a man should always wait and consider fully his grounds of objection before deciding that they are fatal to a favourable opinion. Especially is this so when new facts crop up that threaten to upset old convictions. New facts take time to get into perspective, and the very fact that our opinions seem in need of correction, should make us slow to consider the newly acquired opinion final.

I now consider some typical objections, on logical grounds, to Christianity, but only with a view to showing that they are at least not conclusive. First I will deal with those attacking the more specific elements of historical Christianity, then with those opposed to its fundamental metaphysical and philosophical conceptions.

## CHAPTER X

### OPINION AND CHRISTIANITY

Most can raise the flowers now  
For all have got the seed.

TENNYSON. *The Flower.*

IN this Essay I consider the supposed opposition between scientific facts and Christianity.

The first form in which this objection meets us is usually a broad assertion that most scientists of repute are anti-Christian. This is not true. The Rev. G. T. Manley published the result of an enquiry into this question in a pamphlet called *The Views of Modern Science*<sup>1</sup>. This pamphlet is well worth study. He quotes statistics, supplied to him by a Fellow of the Royal Society, of the religious position of all who had held office in that Society living at a certain date—142 in all. The figures are:—

Unknown...	...	...	...	...	71
Publicly professed Christians	...	...	...	...	33
From personal knowledge believed to be					
Christian	...	...	...	...	27
Professed sceptics or agnostics	...	...	...	...	6
From personal knowledge thought to be					
non-Christian	...	...	...	...	5

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Church Missionary Society, 1901.

Thus out of 71 men, 60 were known or believed to be Christian, 11 non-Christian, and so the objection as commonly made is not true to fact. If then it be asserted that the most eminent scientists have usually been anti-Christian, this again is not true; for publicity is no evidence of eminence. Without detracting from their merits as scientists, it must be admitted that Haeckel, Buchner, Huxley, Tyndall and others owe their fame chiefly to their popular anti-Christian writings. There are many names held in equal and higher estimation by the scientific world which are almost unknown to the general public. Again, anyone writing on the orthodox side will attract far less attention than a less able writer with something new and sensational to propound. Thus the names of Strauss, Baur and Renan are known widely though their theories are untenable at the present day, but the sound scholars who refuted them are known only to the specialist. Probably those who have heard of Robert Blatchford are many more than those who know the names of Westcott, Lightfoot, Whewell, Whately and others.

Whether or no the systems of Huxley, Haeckel, etc. are sound is another matter. They will be discussed later; my point now is that their reputations do not rest upon their scientific eminence, and they are therefore no proof of the truth of this objection. There remains however one name of a man pre-

eminent in science, and a non-Christian, Darwin. Darwin professes himself to waver between Theism and Agnosticism, but he repeatedly maintains that the philosophical principle propounded by him and supported by his classical observations of nature in no way militates against religion<sup>1</sup>; indeed he says, "our minds refuse to accept...the grand sequence of events as the result of blind chance<sup>2</sup>."

Seeing then that there is anything but a consensus of opinion against Christianity among eminent scientists, and that the one pre-eminent scientist who was a non-Christian does not ascribe his unbelief to the theory on which his fame rests<sup>3</sup>, or indeed to science at all, it is hardly true to say that Science has spoken decisively against Christianity. The reasons of the conflict between religion and science are mainly that philosophers have claimed the authority of science for anti-Christian systems, and theologians have claimed the authority of religion for theories on scientific subjects, and asserted that these theories were essential to religion. Every one (except the Zetetic astronomers)

<sup>1</sup> *Descent of Man*, Pt I. Chap. III. p. 143. Murray's edition, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pt III. Chap. XXI. p. 937. Murray's edition, 1901.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that his theory may not be opposed to religion; no man has a private property in his theory, and subsequent writers are at liberty to extend the principle if they can; only Darwin's fame must not be held to give weight to their applications. I add this because one often hears it said that since Darwin did not think his theory anti-Christian no one else has a right to make it so—a wholly false conclusion.



recognises that the theologians were mistaken in their opposition to Galileo's views, and most people recognise that a similar mistake was made in regard to Darwin. And the assertions of philosophers speaking in the name of science must be judged by the philosophic, not the scientific, qualifications of the authors. None of the scientist-philosophers is considered important in the philosophic world except perhaps Herbert Spencer; and of him a "leading Science Professor in Cambridge" is reported to have said, "Professor Ward<sup>1</sup> tells me that his philosophy is worse than his science; but I think that is impossible<sup>2</sup>."

Let it once more be clearly understood that my sole object here is to remove the unwarranted prejudice against Christianity created by the popular reputation of these men. I do not profess to have wiped them off the slate by these statements, nor that the numbers quoted in favour of Christianity tend to establish it; they only go to prove that the decisive rejection of Christianity by Modern Science is simply a bogey which should impose on us no longer. The views of philosophers will be discussed in the next Essay, but here I will say that they by no means favour the materialistic theories put forward in the name of science.

I will now discuss briefly one typical instance of a

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Philosophy in Cambridge.

<sup>2</sup> *Views of Modern Science*, p. 11.



supposed clashing between the results of Christianity and science. I cannot go into any more in these Essays, but this one is typical of so many that it is worth while glancing at it. It is a type of conflict between opinion and creed; I refer to the doctrine of the Fall of Man, and the story of Adam. Their importance lies not in the fact of their inclusion in the Bible, but in the fact that St Paul and others appear to regard them as fundamental in the Christian creed and base important arguments on them.

Faced with such a problem we must ask:—

1. Whether the argument is really important.
2. Whether it would not be equally valid if the writer had consciously referred to the incident as legendary.
3. Whether the true basis of the argument is not after all real. This basis is commonly the spiritual significance of the legend.

In this instance I think all three considerations are applicable. The argument, though important, cannot be said to be of fundamental importance. The essential thing is the fact of sin and its need of redemption rather than its origin. Secondly, if dramatic fitness is alone intended, it is clear that this is in no way impaired by the legendariness of the story. If this dramatic fitness, however, is intended to explain Christ's work, it becomes necessary to see whether the elements of it do not inhere in the facts underlying the legend.

St Paul's argument is that "By Man came Death," "In Adam all die," and that the bringing of life by Christ is parallel to the introduction of death "by one man" and made comprehensible by the comparison.

As an indisputable fact, the Fall has its counterpart in our own lives. Each of us awakes to a moral sense and finds that he is at fault, losing an elementary innocence, but even in our fall approaching to a state nearer the Divine<sup>1</sup>. Thus Adam may be well taken to be representative of the human race, and "in Adam all die" has a genuine meaning. For St Paul "death" does not mean physical death, even supposing that he believed that no physical death occurred before man's sin. Compare his words<sup>2</sup> "I was alive apart from the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." The very spiritual progress involved in the fall, the increase of spiritual perception and horizon, introduced the germs of a permanent dissatisfaction with a finite life, and thus death became a "thing that mattered" from the time of the introduction of a moral sense.

If it be further maintained that the argument depends on the introduction of sin by *one* man, I would point out that this too is, even on evolutionary principles, probable, or at least not impossible<sup>3</sup>. I do

<sup>1</sup> Genesis iii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Romans vii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Since this was written I find the following sentence in *Evolution*, a volume of the Home University Library Series, by Professors J. A.

not wish to urge this point, but I give it as an example of a case in which the wholesale rejection of an old legend has been a little too hasty, also because the idea here expressed is one which is commonly overlooked; but the method of meeting these difficulties is the important point, not the actual argument I use. I say that sin was probably introduced by one man, for this reason, that the essential feature of manhood is a developed moral sense, conscious of sin. Even in Genesis a rudimentary moral sense is presupposed before the fall, but the fall introduced the knowledge of good and evil. Precisely so in the race history, of which the individual history is usually a résumé, there must have come a point at which the degree of development of the moral sense was enough to differentiate its possessors from other animals. And it is highly probable, to my mind, that this occurred first as the result of failure at some moral crisis in one outstanding individual, from whom the consciousness spread to his fellows, who thus became his spiritual posterity, and, in the sense continually used in Scripture, his "sons." This "spiritual pioneering" is an exceedingly important and common phenomenon, and produces nearly all the eras of importance, at least in religion. One man sets a fashion, which awakens

Thomson and P. Geddes: "It is possible that man arose as a mutation, *as an anthropoid genius in short*, but the factors that led to his emergence are all unknown." The italics are mine.

dormant ideas in his successors' minds, and from that time forth things become possible that were before unknown. When Pope's couplets were published, scores of men, who else would not have written a word, found themselves able to turn out verses like his; and so too in music and painting. In the Old Testament the idea of a life of faith was introduced by Abraham; in the New Testament those who follow his example are reckoned his true sons. In this same sense too most truly is Jesus the pioneer of a life which He "brought to light—through the gospel." And it is well seen that this is no figure of speech when one realises that for lack of such a pioneer the non-Christian races have never attained to the conception of this life. Even Buddhism in its best forms has not got beyond the idea that "He that hath died is justified from sin<sup>1</sup>." It has no life beyond such death; no sanctification and right use for the activities of men. It seems to me therefore far from improbable that so important a revolution as the marked development of the moral sense should have originated with an individual, the first man; and my point is that *if* this be considered essential to the truth of the fundamentals of Christianity, it is certainly not contested by the theory of evolution. Personally I do not think it necessary to insist on this argument.

It may perhaps be useful to say that very many

<sup>1</sup> Romans vi. 7.

hold that the doctrine of Kenosis (founded on Philip-  
pians ii. 7 and the many phrases expressing ignorance  
and surprise used by Jesus) must be extended to cover  
ignorance of all historical and scientific fact to which  
He had no natural access, at any rate as a general rule.  
Thus the words attributing Psalm cx. to David need  
not commit us to a Davidic authorship for that psalm  
(though the contrary is not proved); it is enough that  
the appeal is to an element in the current idea of  
Messiah evidenced by this psalm's place among those  
ascribed to David.

I cannot here enter into discussions of other  
difficulties. Suffice it if these examples show that a  
little patient and sympathetic examination will often  
remove them, especially if carried down to the funda-  
mental spiritual import of the matter.

## CHAPTER XI

### CHRISTIANITY AND PHILOSOPHY

They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

TENNYSON. *In Memoriam.*

BEFORE examining the various anti-Christian systems in particular, let us consider the relation of Christianity to philosophies in general. And in the first place we are met by a parallel assertion to that which we discussed in the last Essay, that most philosophers are non-Christian. Here again the same replies hold good. For in philosophy even more than any other subject, novelty is almost necessary to notoriety; and if not novelty, then a popular literary style. Of necessity the best known names are those of founders of "schools," and the essence of a "school" is difference in some point or other from its predecessors or contemporaries. To found a school argues indeed a considerable philosophical power, penetration of thought and ingenuity of argument and illustration; but the very fact of diversity of opinion among these men should warn us against a blind acceptance of their views; moreover, were it true that there was

a general agreement among them in rejecting Christianity, the argument would be still more fatal to any other system. As with the famous Themistocles vote, each of them would maintain his own system first, but for second place I think there would be more in favour of Christianity (or rather of the philosophy involved in it), than of any other rival system.

But we may go further and deny that there is anything like a consensus of opinion against Christianity among them. In many respects their opinions do not clash with Christianity at all; some, as Descartes, Leibnitz and Lotze, were professed Christians; Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Spinoza all were believers in God; Kant also in freedom and immortality; Martineau was a Theist; and as for Hegel, though his interpreters confessedly disagree, here is the version given by one (which at lowest represents the conclusions of an able philosopher thinking along the lines pursued by Hegel): "There is for Hegel nothing but God; and this God is a personal God, no mere Pantheistic Substance that just passively undergoes a mutation of necessity<sup>1</sup>." And again, "So little does this scheme seem to Hegel to contradict Christianity that it is just on this scheme that he is able to perceive that Christianity is, must be, and can only be, the Revealed Religion. Christianity is, in his hands,

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret of Hegel*, J. Hutchison Stirling, p. 720 (Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1898. Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh).

rescued.....from the contingency and externality of mere history.....and restored to a spiritual reality which is one and identical with the absolute inner of the living soul<sup>1</sup>." "It is the doctrine of the Trinity which constitutes to Hegel the central and vital principle of Christianity<sup>2</sup>." These quotations and the extracts from Hegel's works on pp. 722 sqq. of *The Secret of Hegel* show conclusively that philosophy no more than science has decided to reject Christianity.

Next let us consider our attitude towards other systems in general. Many such in reality do not conflict with Christianity at all, and it is always important to make sure of the real implications of any system before looking on it as anti-Christian. Much of Pantheism, much of Agnosticism is contained in Christianity, and the arguments which support these elements in other systems are in no way necessarily opposed to it. In other cases the claim of reasonableness may be all that is made for a system, and if Christianity can be shown to be equally reasonable, no more is needed to justify a choice of Christianity. It is only when a system claims exclusive right to acceptance or definitely attacks the Christian conception, that it compels our attention; we may then either be content with refuting its claim to exclusiveness, or, if we can, refute its claim to reasonableness at

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret of Hegel*, J. Hutchison Stirling, p. 721.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 722.



all. This claim to exclusiveness is made chiefly by those which base themselves on natural science and the scientific method, by which they claim to demonstrate their conclusions and therefore to command adherence.

Now let us turn to the systems themselves, but remember that my purpose is only to show that no one of them has in fact finally closed the question against Christianity, in order that the reader may hereafter go forward to a fuller investigation of them with a mind fully open.

In most or all metaphysical systems the distinction is made between things as they impress us, "phenomena," and the reality underlying phenomena, "noūmena"; and systems differ chiefly in their opinions as to the nature of noūmena. Those that agree in applying the term "God" to The Noūmenon of the Cosmos differ in their concepts of His Being.

Chief among these systems we have Scepticism, Presentationism, Materialism, Neutral Monism, "Spiritualism" (or Idealism), Agnosticism, Pantheism, Pluralism, Theism. Naturalism is practically another term for Neutral Monism, but it is sometimes used to describe a variety of Agnosticism. Spiritualism is not the same thing as the Spiritualism of the séances, which is better called Spiritism, a term used by Psychical Research people to denote the theory of those who hold that séance-phenomena are caused by disembodied spirits. Idealism or "Spiritualism"

may form a metaphysical basis for Spiritism, Theism, Pantheism, Pluralism and the obsolete Deism. Theism is involved in Christianity; but, as I have said already, much of the positive content of Pantheism is also contained in Christianity. Positivism and Secularism are varieties of Agnosticism. Determinism is an element common to the majority of these systems, and, as I think, constitutes the real crux of the matter. It is dealt with at some length in Essay XII. I will almost confine myself to a statement of the main position of each of these and the more obvious objections. (Atheism, of course, is only the name of a conclusion common to some, and Rationalism is a method, not a system.)

Scepticism, a term loosely used to describe all these systems, is properly applied to the doctrine that, since the universality of causation is unproved and unprovable, we can know nothing at all but sequence of phenomena; in other words, it proclaims the rational sense untrustworthy. But in order to maintain itself, it must abrogate its own position. Either, therefore, it should refrain from philosophising at all or it should agree to assume the rational sense to be consistently valid for the knowledge of other propositions. In neither case can it press a claim for acceptance, but should in individual cases be merged in Agnosticism.

Presentationism maintains that our states of consciousness are the sole reality; that there is no

underlying and permanent noumenon, but that subject and object consist in the state of consciousness. The objection is that the state of consciousness that announces this is also but a link in a series of states of consciousness, and it is impossible to understand how a link could perceive itself to be a link unless it could persist beyond itself. This piece of knowledge then has no rational ground or origin discoverable, and this system leaves us with no ground for believing itself, since knowledge without rational basis is untrustworthy.

Materialism is a system which appeals forcibly to the student of Physiology and Natural Science generally. It is one that maintains the reality of matter, that matter is the reality underlying phenomena. If the mind is allowed an equal degree of reality and activity, then there is no necessary anti-Christian element in it. It matters not a whit to Christianity what we consider the "stuff" of mind to be, so long as we admit it to a full and real activity, subject to its own laws. The objection to Materialism lies in the fact that metaphysics repudiates this dualism as unphilosophical, and then matter becomes the sole reality, governed only by physical laws, and determining the mind. Even so, the problem for us is mainly one with the problem of determinism, but presented in an acute form; but since there are exceedingly sound objections, from a purely philosophical point of view,

to all forms of materialism, I will go into it a little more fully.

Philosophically, Materialism has to explain the relation between matter and mind, and the correspondence between these. Three explanations are offered.

1. Material states *cause* mental states. Apart from the difficulty of suggesting how this may be, it is irrational to assert causation from matter to mind and deny the possibility of mind causing material effects.

2. Material states cause material states, mental cause mental, and the two run parallel. In this case, besides the failure to explain why they run parallel, we have no explanation of the way we come to know of the existence of the material series at all.

3. The mental states are "epiphenomena" of the material, like shadows. The great objection to this view is that if our mental states be dependent on another series of states fundamentally foreign to mind, or at least governed by laws which are not mental and over which the mental states have no sort of influence or control, then there is no reason at all why there should be any real correspondence between the two series. For example, supposing that all that happens is simply the result of the interaction of physical forces and laws, and that it simply happens to be the nature of matter that it should cast a "mental shadow," then, unless that mental shadow, or the fact of its existence,

can in some way influence those physical laws and forces, it is clear that things would be going on exactly the same if there were no mental shadow at all. I should be writing and you reading of consciousness and mental processes even though they were non-existent. In this instance we can see that the result of our mental processes need bear no relation at all to reality. I choose the example of non-existence of a mental shadow because the result is so palpably absurd, but the point would be the same if the mental shadow were supposed different from what it happens to be; the argument is that since the world would go on just the same whether our mental side were in correspondence with material fact or not, there is no reason to suppose that it is in correspondence and the theory itself provides no reason, such as natural selection, why it should be in correspondence, for by the hypothesis it has had no influence whatever on the mechanical processes which alone can cause anything.

Since Materialism is chief among the systems that claim the authority of science, we must examine this claim also. It rests on the assertion that science reveals to us matter and motion and nothing more; that these are sufficient to explain all observed phenomena, and therefore we have no right to hypostatise anything further.

We can contest all these statements. Science does not reveal matter at all. As defined for Materialism,

matter is of course stripped of the "secondary" qualities of colour, hardness, etc. which are recognised as being due to the observer and not inherent in matter. The primary qualities of extension and mass alone are left. A little reflection, however, shows that these qualities too are due to the observer. It is well known that we do not judge of space and form by immediate visual impressions but by an interpretation of these by our sense of movement. When we look at an object we receive two impressions, one with each eye, which other sensations have taught us to fuse into one. Our idea of space is an instinctive hypothesis to account for our sensations; mass fares no better, for when we come to think of the "absolute" size or mass or density of things, we find that any scale at all, down to zero, will do equally well provided the proportions are kept the same.

As a matter of fact, there is a large mass of observed fact recorded by eminent scientists, such as telepathy, which matter has not yet explained; it may do so in the future, and one would not like to try to use these facts to refute Materialism<sup>1</sup>; but they show that its claim to command adherence because of its complete explanation of phenomena cannot be made good. But a much more important point is this, that a hypothesis, not of matter at all, but of geometrical points of attraction

<sup>1</sup> Especially as other eminent scientists dispute them, though they apparently do so mainly in the interests of Materialism.

and repulsion is equally well able to explain phenomena. This shows us clearly that matter is no more than a hypothesis,—a mental abstraction to unify and help us to classify our mental states. It cannot be defined or described without reference to its effect on mind. This, of course, is not to say that there is nothing outside our individual minds, but it does warrant us in saying that that outside thing is ill conceived when a mental abstraction is made so concrete as to replace and supersede the mental states and processes which it was invented to co-ordinate.

The force of this objection has been so universally admitted that crude Materialism is little heard of in philosophy, but in its place "Neutral Monism" maintains the same positions without the mistake of defining the *noūmenon* as "matter," with extension etc. Instead we have a third something, neither matter nor mind, which inwardly looks like mind, outwardly like matter. If the mental side be allowed to be real, and a real representative of the *noūmenon*, then this differs not at all from saying that the *noūmenon* really is mind; but if the *tertium quid* is supposed to have non-mental laws of its own, and mind is relegated to the epiphenomenal position, then the same objection holds good, that the conclusions of the epiphenomenal series have no reason to be related to the reality at all, and there is no way whereby we can know anything to be true, including the theory itself.



If, however, while the reality of mind is admitted, it is argued that the "matter-aspect" of it reveals law and no freedom, we have then only idealism with determinism. This will be discussed in the next Essay.

A subvariety of Materialism, called Medical Materialism by Professor William James and well refuted by him in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, attempts to discredit all religious sentiments by ascribing them to morbid action of one or another organ, and maintaining that the perfectly healthy man would have no special religious ideas or aspirations. As Professor James points out, truth is to be judged of, not by the health of its enunciator, but by its logical coherence with other known truth. We speak of "feverish fancies" because we find they do not tally with other observed facts; for all we know, he says, a temperature of 103 degrees might be more favourable for the germination of truth in the brain than 98·4 degrees. It is their falsity, not the fever, which condemns them.

Having excluded these, the only remaining answer is that of Idealism. Idealism has its difficulties too, but since it is in no way antagonistic to Christianity they do not concern us here. Certain philosophical systems included under this head which are to some extent anti-Christian we shall note presently, but first there is Agnosticism and a train of deductions from it to be considered.

Agnosticism properly has two meanings. As



originally used by Huxley, it was simply the position of those who did not profess to have found the solution of the problems of the universe.

Agnosticism of this kind, if it be *pure* agnosticism and have no bias against idealism or Christianity, is only the expression of the diffidence proper to the interregnum. A humility of this kind, grounding its ignorance solely on the inexperience of youth or a personal lack of attainment, is in no wise to be objected to, provided that one does not rest content or go on to deny that anyone else can have reached a valid conclusion.

But as generally used, the term connotes a different set of ideas. They are agnostics, in metaphysics or philosophy, who maintain that the ultimate decision of questions of the nature of noumena, or of God, is beyond the scope of human powers—that these are not merely unknown but unknowable. It is a pertinent question to ask, How do they know that God is unknowable? How do they know that God could not reveal Himself? The reply is that this knowledge comes from a consideration of known human faculties and the laws of knowledge, which show that even did God reveal Himself, man could not become recipient of that revelation. This means then, that if the most important fact in the universe were told to us, we could not know it to be true, *on this theory of knowledge*; and the obvious deduction is that the theory

of knowledge which excludes so important a piece of information must be defective. I think that the fault lies in the definitions of knowledge. For scientific purposes it is defined with reference to evidence and reason, but we have seen already that this definition excludes a pronouncement on the truth of the important proposition of the validity of reasoning<sup>1</sup>. Scientifically this is not "known," but practically it is known; for in practical life that is considered known to which the sense of assurance may be properly attached. No one would assert that mankind was acting unjustifiably in attaching a sense of assurance to the results of reasoning, though in order to do so it must attach the same assurance to a proposition *not* the result but the ground of reasoning; which shows that knowledge should be so defined as to leave open other channels of access to the human mind besides that of strict evidence. The channel by which this proposition reaches us is of the nature of faith, and we have seen that this opens a way of communication with God also.

Rationalism rules out all that is not demonstrable by reasoning. To its main principle, extended as I have extended it, there can be no objection, but when it excludes the justifiable use of faith, or claims to control conduct exclusive of any reference to morality, or rejects the miraculous *a priori*—in short, identifies

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 14, 69-70.

itself with reasoning from a narrow basis—it is open to the objections already put forward in the course of these essays.

From Agnosticism spring Secularism, Positivism, Naturalism and other minor systems.

Naturalism is a vague and loose term for a group of conceptions of the universe as “Nature,” the nature of Nature being left undefined, but sometimes assumed as quasi-materialistic. It derives its importance only from posing as a half-sister of Science, and its real point is the assertion that the demonstration of law in Nature leads inevitably to Determinism.

Positivism and Secularism argue that since we do know the present and do not know the Beyond, it is reasonable to pay our whole attention to the present and waste no energy in speculation, much less live as for the future. Positivism is only a specially elaborated form of this idea associated with the name of Comte. Besides the objection to the Agnosticism on which they are founded, there is also the mathematical fact before mentioned, that the least chance of the infinite is worth more than any finite value, therefore it is always reasonable to embrace the possibility of a transcendent value for life until this has been irrefragably proved impossible<sup>1</sup>.

Of Pantheism and Deism little need be said. Deism, the idea of a God who set the world going ages ago and

<sup>1</sup> See p. 17.

then retired to watch it from a distance, is now obsolete; it flourished in the eighteenth century, and its point was in its deterministic deductions.

Pantheism was a revolt from this, and it maintains the doctrine of the immanence of God in everything. This is Christian doctrine too, but Pantheism differs from Christianity and Theism in making God impersonal, unconscious, and without attributes. The argument is that God is equally in good and evil, therefore these have no real difference, and so with any pair of opposites. The concept thus arises from the problem of evil, and as that is germane to the problem of freedom, it will be discussed in the next Essay. We have already seen that it is a philosophical and mathematical mistake to consider that the infinite must be without any characteristics; and for the rest, Pantheism has still the old question to answer, "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see<sup>1</sup>?" It would appear then that it is based on a false conception of infinity, and on the difficulties of the problem of evil. Its importance for Christianity lies in its denial of the validity of the distinction of good and evil; and we have seen that this very conclusion may be fairly considered an evidence of a fallacy in the reasoning<sup>2</sup>.

Spiritism we need not consider. It can as yet

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xciv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Essay VIII, last paragraph but one.

make no serious claim to be proved; so far no conclusive tests have been devised to exclude telepathic effects altogether; nor can a coherent system be formulated from the utterances of the spirits as yet.

Pluralism is a system now coming once more into prominence. It is also called Realism and Humanism. Its argument is that we should start from the one thing we do know, the human mind, and explain the rest in terms of that; from this it reaches the idea of a vast plurality of spirits. It has objections to face, but for our purpose it is enough to know that it is by no means necessarily incompatible with Theism, as Professor Ward has shown in the Gifford Lectures, 1907-10<sup>1</sup>. No one has a right to claim that Pluralism excludes Theism until he has refuted the arguments in those lectures. But not only so, the vogue of Pluralism, be it right or wrong, shows conclusively that philosophical opinion has by no means settled the freedom dispute in favour of Determinism. The very essence of Pluralism is the reality of freedom, in fact one meets with an *embarras de richesses* in that respect. Mechanism and uniformity are but superficial appearances, and the very "atoms" behave as they do because they like it. The mechanism of Nature is the mechanism of habit, such as a pianist acquires by constant practice, voluntarily acquired, and alterable if need arises; the uniformity is the uniformity of

<sup>1</sup> Published as *The Realm of Ends. Pluralism and Theism.*

mass-action, the uniformity registered by the statistician, which is in no way a compelling force, and appears so uniform simply by ignoring the abundance of individual contingencies it includes. Approximately uniform numbers of people leave Paddington Station every summer, but in registering this fact we have registered nothing that exerts any sort of compulsion on any individual to do so. "The statist is aware that individual variations underly his aggregates, but they do not interest him; the physicist is ignorant of those underlying his, and assumes that they do not exist<sup>1</sup>."

Theism is included in Christianity which conceives God as both Immanent and Transcendent. It is sometimes set up as a religion by itself, when it is distinguished from Christianity by rejection of miracle and the doctrine of the Trinity, and approaches Unitarianism. The objections to this have been discussed in Essay VI.

With the systems of Ethics that oppose Christianity, I need not deal; they are mostly only theories of the derivation of morals, and do not impugn their authority; it is only when they tend to reverse the moral judgments of Christianity that they become important, and one may equally well stand by Christianity and deny their derivations. One dictum that is sometimes troublesome to answer is the assertion that all acts are directed by self-interest, that love is a refined

<sup>1</sup> Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 66.

form of selfishness and not really more creditable. To which the answer is that a desire's morality is gauged by its object; to take pleasure in pleasing others is better than to take pleasure in pleasing oneself. And it must be remembered that Christianity nowhere makes claim of *merit* for the doer of righteousness.

These few remarks must not be supposed to be an attempt to confute all the anti-Christian systems in a few pages. To these replies there are counter-replies on both sides; but they may serve to show that there are weak spots in walls that at first sight appear impregnable. I have set them down here because I personally believe them to express the gist of a real fallacy in each system, but the reader will not be justified in claiming that opinion as his own without much further investigation.



## CHAPTER XII

### CHRISTIANITY AND DETERMINISM

The mechanical theory too must postulate a primitive collocation of atoms which its laws can never explain.

WARD. *The Realm of Ends.*

Let psychology frankly admit that *for her scientific purposes* determinism may be *claimed*, and no one can find fault. Now ethics makes a counter-claim; and the present writer, for one, has no hesitation in regarding her claim as the stronger, and in assuming that our wills are "free." For him, then, the deterministic assumption of psychology is merely provisional and methodological.

WILLIAM JAMES. *Psychology.*

THE problem of Determinism for religion is identical with the problem of evil. The problem of evil vanishes if moral freedom be admitted, and Determinism would raise no difficulty but for the existence of evil. It will have been seen that to me the real crux of religion lies in this question, and several times I have referred to this Essay for the completion of a discussion. It must be understood from the outset that I do not propose to solve these age-long questions in a few pages. The scope of these Essays is strictly limited to an attempt to show that the question has not been finally closed against Christianity by the existence of these difficulties—that they do not make an opinion in



favour of Christianity once and for all unreasonable. For this reason I do not confine myself to one line of reply but try to point out all the weak spots in the formidable attack. My work is done if I can open for the reader a door supposed to be closed for ever and let in light enough for him to look round in tranquillity.

I begin, then, as indicated in the last Essay, by asking if Determinism is by universal admission necessarily opposed to Christianity; and to this the answer must surely be, No. A *blind* Necessity is certainly an anti-Christian conception, but whole schools of philosophic Christianity have been at the same time not only believers in Determinism but even supporters of it as an important element in Christianity. In view of this, Determinism cannot be said to be obviously fatal to Christianity. These schools may be illogical, or their doctrine may be founded on a false basis, but they are intelligent enough to make it wise to suspend a verdict against them until we know what their arguments are. On the other hand we have seen how the mechanical Determinism involved in materialistic schemes does prove fatal to them by depriving them of a theory of knowledge; and I think it is equally fatal to Pantheism, since on determinist lines all that is actual was potential from the beginning, and thus the one Substance must eternally have contained the various characteristics since developed. This however is only by the way, to show that

Determinism embarrasses other systems as much as Christianity.

Secondly, we might take the "short way" outlined in Essay VIII, and argue that any system based on reasoning that undercut the foundations of morality had thereby undercut its own foundations, and that an equally probable system might be erected based on morality and invalidating reason. This line of argument is perfectly valid, the more so as it does not in fact prove necessary to invalidate reason in this case, but only to show that there is a considerable possibility that Determinism is based on an unwarrantable extension of an analogy.

However, I do not think this attitude is essential to our whole position, so I purpose to take the arguments of determinists in more detail; and first we will assume it proved absolutely beyond question that every act, thought, and volition of man is predestined and that God is responsible for this predestination.

The first result of this admission is the assertion that since I am predestined I cannot choose and therefore it is no matter what I do. Responsibility is an illusion, choice is an illusion; what I am fated to do will be done apart from any volition or effort of mine. This is the fatalist position.

It is scarcely necessary to say that it is wholly illogical. Granted that the ends are determined, yet

they are not determined apart from the means which are an integral part of them. The phenomenon we call "choice" is an integral part of the act; and in taking up the position suggested, we are displaying this phenomenon, we are "choosing." The fact is that choice, volition, etc., belong to the sphere of conduct, and in this sphere that which is unknown, *is not*. Freedom, within this sphere, is real whatever it may be, actually; more than this, it is inevitable. We cannot abrogate our choice and volition except by a volition; and while we imagine we are suffering our conduct to be determined by our fate (in itself a wholly absurd proposition since by hypothesis we cannot but do so, without the need of a special "abdication" to secure it), we are really suffering it to be determined by an imperfect and doubtful guess at the nature of that fate. The nature of our destiny is absolutely inaccessible to our knowledge, and in the sphere of conduct motive and choice must have exercise; so the fatalist is but allowing an unknown fact, guessed from incomplete data, to influence his motives in their effect on his actions.

It is important to get this conception of the "conduct-sphere" clear. Without claiming a final reality<sup>1</sup> for it, I do assert that freedom and all it

<sup>1</sup> As I understand it, moral pluralism makes this sphere the ultimate reality. For the pluralist impeachment of Determinism see Essay XI, p. 104.

involves is real in this sphere; that this sphere is as "real" as conduct and everyday life; and, most important of all, that *religion belongs almost entirely to this sphere*. It is for purposes of conduct that the anthropomorphic concept of God is legitimate, and in this His name is used to connote the Not-ourselves-which-makes-for-righteousness<sup>1</sup>. The separation of God from man, in which many of the problems of Determinism are rooted, belongs properly to the conduct-sphere in which Determinism has no logical place.

An objection may be raised here, that if for conduct that of which we are not conscious is non-existent, then we are not responsible for our sins; for many or all of them are committed as the result of a temporary lack of perception. The motives that awake afterwards to cause regret and repentance and remorse are at the time asleep and for us non-existent. To this I reply that it is this very "motive-sleep" that constitutes the sin, and, according to Christianity, we are responsible for it because it is not necessary. He who will use the adjuvants faithfully, and especially "faith" in the sense of depending consciously on a power beyond ourselves, will not suffer from "motive-sleep" in time of need. (This is that aspect of faith whose discussion was left over from Essay VI.) In scientific phrase of to-day we may perhaps explain it to ourselves

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold. *Literature and Dogma*, Chapter I.

as laying up a store of strength in the subconscious and opening the channels from that to the conscious, but I need hardly remark that this terminology explains nothing unless taken in conjunction with a materialist hypothesis; and that the language of religion is quite as appropriate. Refusal to use the adjuvants is index of lack of genuine desire to succeed, that is of lack of faith. Truly again the question arises whether we are responsible for a congenital defect in faith; but again I say that whatever may be the answer to this we cannot use it to excuse a deliberate carelessness of conduct, for we no more know what our congenital condition is than we know our fate, except by guesswork, and it has no logical place as a determinant of choice, with which religion is mainly concerned.

Yet, since this question does undoubtedly press us hard, we must go on to consider it. Granted that deterministic notions have no logical right to affect conduct directly, yet if we know as a matter of fact that in reality God is responsible for the defects in us that cause us to sin, then God is responsible ultimately for our sins, and many questions arise as to His goodness and therefore as to the validity of the moral sense; and by this route Determinism may have a right to affect conduct, by affecting our moral standards. Indeed some argue that, given foreknowledge, even freedom in man would not relieve God of responsibility;

that He ought not to have given man freedom knowing that he would misuse it. This last position seems to me untenable. The manufacturers of knives cannot reasonably be blamed for the murders done with them though they may know that a certain number of the knives issued will be thus misused. And to say that God should have withheld such freedoms as He knew would be misused is really to impugn freedom altogether, for it is not freedom unless it involves the possibility of misuse. Surely it may be admitted that to give freedom and train it to a right use is a perfectly moral act, especially as morality is only possible in spheres where freedom is real. "There is nothing good but a good will."

The bearing of this argument will be seen more clearly when we have discussed our present position with Determinism taken for granted. I shall impeach the validity of the whole position presently, but a temporary acceptance of it will conduce to clearer understanding.

Well then, granted that God is finally responsible for all my acts, good and bad, several questions arise.

1. Need I regret them? Certainly it is reasonable to regret them. I and others might have suffered less if I had not sinned. And whatever answer may be given as regards my own inward sensation of regret, repentance issuing in better conduct is imperative. Deterministic considerations have no place in conduct,

and the regret that issues in better conduct may not logically be abrogated by ideas drawn from a different sphere. Philosophically perhaps one may recognise the good in evil, but this is quite compatible with a genuine regret.

2. Is it not wrong in God to cause sin ?

I think an illustration may help us here ; for although it is quite true that morality in God must be the same as morality in man or it becomes meaningless, yet in reference to any special act the morality may depend on the position of the actor. The old illustration of father and child makes this clear at once. It is wrong for one child to strike another, but it may be quite right for the father to do so. Again the father may inflict on himself suffering that the child might not inflict on him. He may starve himself to feed the child, though the child might not go and claim or snatch away his father's food. So too in life ; one man may not kill another, but God cannot be rightly reckoned a wholesale murderer because He did not make man immortal on this earth. The sin of Judas and the Jews was great, but that same act was the culmination of the holiness of God.

It will be seen at once that the justifying factor in these illustrations is the good of the child, and on these lines it needs only to be shown that the suffering God inflicts tends to the good of the sufferer. Whether this is so or not we cannot at present determine



directly, but we can fall back on the other evidences of the goodness of God, the gradual progress of morality in history, the survival of the moral sense—in fact all the evidences of Christianity—to justify us in trust that things dark to us now may be making for an end of good as yet unseen. And while this view certainly does tend to identify good and evil *actions*, it leaves good and evil as distinct as ever in themselves, and not one whit justifies a man in the deliberate performance of evil.

3. But in that case is it right for God to punish sin He has caused?

To this question there are two answers possible; but first be it observed that the chief sting of it lay in the doctrine of perpetual torment. This being rejected<sup>1</sup>, we are left with the question as to whether it is immoral for God to make men of two kinds, one with temporal tastes and one with eternal tastes, and to assign them a culmination higher or lower or even in annihilation in accordance with this. I think it would be bold to decide this question so conclusively as to make it a ground for rejecting Christianity. But secondly I think it is perfectly open to us to embrace the "Larger Hope," the hope

That not one life shall be destroy'd  
Or cast as rubbish to the void  
When God hath made the pile complete<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Essay VII.

<sup>2</sup> *In Memoriam*, Canto LIV.



I shall at once be met with the reply that this is not Christianity, that Christianity teaches the opposite. I venture to deny that. Many orthodox Christians hold the view, and with the exception of the parable of Dives and Lazarus and the allegories of the Revelation, nothing in the New Testament is incompatible with it; while on the other hand Christ distinctly singles out one sin, the sin of deliberate persistent moral perverseness, as having no forgiveness, "neither in this world nor in that which is to come<sup>1</sup>," and expressly announces that punishment shall be graded to the degree of knowledge<sup>2</sup>. The objection to this doctrine is really based on the mistaken idea that it does away with the importance of holiness. Nothing could be more mistaken. The doctrine, if valid, has its roots entirely in its connection with the holiness of God, and therefore can in no way abrogate other conclusions from the same premise. It is, for universalism, not less true but more true that every breach of holiness is a step back which will have to be retraced, every delay puts off the attainment and makes it harder and more painful, and until there is holiness there is no prospect but more and more loss and suffering. Universalism is not antagonistic to evangelism but a vindication of it and an incentive to it. Apart from the Gospel it has no grounds at all.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xii. 47.

I do not in the least wish to press universalism, much less to assert that it is taught in the New Testament; only to say that it appears to be open to anyone to accept it who feels logically compelled to that as an alternative to the rejection of Christianity; though I do not personally think that even a determinist is in this dilemma; and as I myself am not a convinced determinist but rather the opposite I feel no compulsion to maintain it. If I incline to it at all it is because the idea that no will will ultimately prove too stubborn for the Master-Lover, Who will win all without forcing any except by attraction to Himself, following them till all the vanities that blinded have fallen away and left them conscious of loss and destitution—this idea seems to exalt the Love of God to a height worthy of the Cross.

This however is digressing, for we are still assuming Determinism to be proven. There is then one more question.

4. Why did God choose such a painful way of doing good, if evil be justified as a road to good?

Here I think we may quite fairly take refuge in "mystery." What if the highest good be to have been brought through the real experience of sorrow to joy? According to Christianity this seems to be the joy of God Himself. I think it is perfectly legitimate to be content to be agnostic here. We cannot possibly judge in a matter like that; and the difficulty, it must be

remembered, depends largely on the assumption of Determinism, and partly too on a point that I wish to bring out now.

I have already said that I think this quasi-scientific conception of life as determined, this halfway house between the conduct-sphere and the metaphysical sphere, illegitimate. Like the materialist world of the atom and molecule, it has a descriptive value, but it partakes of the reality of neither sphere. The anthropomorphic, "separated" God is a concept of the conduct-sphere. Leaving that we have no lawful stopping place till we come right back to the noumenal God, and view the universe *sub specie aeternitatis*; and while it is true that I have maintained throughout that the relations of this sphere are correctly represented for conduct in the concepts of common life, yet when we strip off one set of attributes and ascribe them to our human mode of vision, we must strip off others too if we would be consistent. Chief among these is time. *Sub specie aeternitatis* the end is coexistent with the process, and the process is as good as the end. We are blindly tracing out parts of a completed picture and are distressed at dark lines which seem to predominate in the part we have reached; *sub specie aeternitatis* they may be even now adding a glory to the sunshine which is the centre of the piece. This illustration is but an illustration, for we cannot properly conceive of eternal conditions,

but this concept greatly enforces the replies already given to the questions, and also—and this is most important—it shows clearly that predestination concepts belong to a transcendental sphere in which the relations that constitute the problem are merged; and that these concepts cannot legitimately be transferred to the sphere of conduct and religion at all.

Now, however, I come to the question whether Determinism is really so conclusively proved as is assumed.

First it will be said that Christianity is committed to it. I think not.

On careful examination of the classical passage in Romans<sup>1</sup> it will be seen that the idea there is not that God causes some to sin and others not, but that all have freely and guiltily sinned and deserved the scriptural punishment of "hardening," but some are, by the mercy of God, redeemed from this and made holy. The passage is exceedingly hard, the difficulty arising as I think from the simultaneous involvement of the two separate spheres in the question he is answering, but I believe the situation is conceived as I have said.

In any case it is not essential to the fundamental faith of Christianity that we should adhere to St Paul's metaphysical ideas, though many are much too hasty in rejecting them. At the very lowest he was a well

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix., cf. Rom. i. 28.

educated, versatile, exceedingly clever man, as well as a spiritual genius.

Now I must direct attention again to an idea we reached before in Essay VIII, of a duality existing between the method and the nature of the universe. This now becomes of the first importance. A little reflection will show that even granting that every successive state of the universe is completely determined by the preceding state, there are yet three things which fall outside the scope of this explanation : 1. Why is there any universe at all? 2. Why does one state cause another? 3. Why is the series of states what it is? The first two questions are simple; neither existence nor causality is explained by any state of the universe. Two illustrations will make the third clear. Conceive the universe as a circular chain of different links arranged according to a definite rule, so that from one you could tell the next; still no link would account for the *pattern of the chain as a whole*. Or mathematically; suppose I write down a series, say 2, 4, 8, 16..... This can be followed backwards and forwards ad infinitum from any one figure when the law connecting them is known. But I might have written a series with the same law but not one figure the same, say 3, 6, 12, 24....., or with a different law and different figures, 5, 15, 45..... It is quite clear that something outside the series determines the nature of the series, its introduction, its law, even that it should

have a law at all. Now ask someone to explain this outside factor, myself, *in terms of the series*, and it will be seen that the explanation of the nature of the universe will naturally be refractory to language entirely derived from the behaviour of the states of the universe as known to us. In short, given the most absolute reign of law within the universe joining one state to another, the nature of the whole, viewed statically, is necessarily free from this law<sup>1</sup>. The immense difficulty we find in conceiving or defining freedom arises from our ideas being exclusively formed from observation of laws in operation, without which coherent thought would have been impossible. None the less we are forced to recognise it in this instance. Very early philosophy recognised it and named it *Τύχη* as opposed to *Ἀνάγκη*. But since we are forced to recognise an element of absoluteness, which is freedom, in the universe as a whole, we must recognise its possibility elsewhere. To push it back to a single operation in an infinitely remote past is wholly unphilosophical; in fact it is Deism. Martineau<sup>2</sup>, again, makes much of the unexplained nature of causality, one of the elements of the nature of the universe; the cause of all causation, itself uncaused, it is, according to him, the objective aspect of what we are inwardly conscious of as personality. There is a cause uncaused,

<sup>1</sup> See the heading of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> *A Study of Religion*.

causality; we feel that *we* are causes uncaused, free persons; why should we go out of our way to deny our own sensations? In fact he maintains that without this inward sense we should never have conceived the idea of cause and effect at all. Be this as it may, the question, why deny our own sensations in this matter, on a little examination has a wholly unsatisfactory answer, for we find that we deny them by an illegitimate extension of analogy from things inanimate and unconscious to things conscious, ignoring the very difference which makes the extension questionable. By a bold generalization it might have been permissible to extend causality to cover all things animate and inanimate alike, though reasoning wholly from observation of the inanimate; but when consciousness, morality, metaphysics and religion all have to be challenged and set aside it is high time that the right to extend was questioned and indeed negatived. That we cannot describe or explain freedom matters little; we *can* say it is not determinism and standing on it deny all the deductions of determinism. If it seem to involve fantastic theories of preexistence and eternity, these are in reality no whit more fantastic than the results of any meditation on the universe when pushed to its ultimate bounds. It is only because science dwells almost entirely within the phenomenal that it looks so solid beside metaphysics.

Not only is this view of personality permissible;



I think it has more to say for itself than rival theories. I have dwelt already on the duality of mode and nature involved in an irrational universe. Matter the substance and motion the method are two things and require explanation separately, but in such a concept as Thought thinking, Spirit, Reason they find unity. While difficulties remain, yet we can trace them all legitimately to the region of mystery when the universe is to us, as it was to Hegel, Spirit expressing its own nature; or as to Carlyle, "not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres; but godlike—and my Father's<sup>1</sup>."

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I have only a little more to add<sup>2</sup>. The function of these Essays will be fulfilled if they help men to receive Christ's teachings and clear the way for that living contact which is the consummation of faith. I have purposely not committed myself to opinions as a rule that the reader may form his own. In reading further, read both sides. An acquaintance with anti-Christian literature robs it of its terrors. There is much in it that is forcible and weighty, and valuable, but none of the conclusive exposure of the folly of Christianity that one half fears to find. Read Haeckel and Huxley, but read also the deeper philosophers;

<sup>1</sup> *Sartor Resartus*, Book II. Ch. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix F, p. 147.



Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, Stirling's *The Secret of Hegel*, and other such. Above all read the Bible itself, and take care to read it in its historical setting and to see with your own eyes its meaning. Much in St John's epistles that appears narrow and local is at once explained when one realises that he was contending with a system that starting from certain theories of Christ's nature proceeded to sanction immoral conduct in the name of Christianity. Especially read the Gospel of St John and see the reasonableness of Christ's claims. Does He, as a matter of fact, supply the spiritual need of man? Then He is, as a matter of plain fact, the Bread of life.

The interregnum is not to be permanent, though in many other matters than religion it would be well if mankind would acknowledge their inability to agree on what was academically correct and proceed to what was useful. But the openness of mind of the interregnum should remain through life as a broadminded sympathy with the difficulties and different views of others, emphasizing unity on fundamentals above divergence on accessories, and putting first and foremost practical loyal devotion to Christ.

## APPENDIX A. (p. 32.)

The corroboration afforded at this stage by the Gospel story is, of course, corroboration of our beliefs, not of our faith. This it cannot corroborate as its acceptance is based on assuming the faith to be true ; but it can quite well corroborate deductions from it, thus playing the same part as it would play in corroborating opinion if the faith were proved and not only assumed. If, starting from one premise, we reach the same conclusions by two totally distinct routes, the validity of those conclusions is made very much more evident.

In this instance one of the most important points is that the Gospel story sanctions that individualist element in our faith on which the deduction of immortality depends. Hitherto it has been assumed, as part of the faith implied in *my* pursuit of the good, that *I* shall benefit thereby. I think it could be shown that this is really necessarily implied in the bare notion of the validity of the moral sense, and could therefore have taken its place as a corollary ; but since it is by no means self-evident I have preferred to leave it as

an assumption involved in individual conduct, merely demonstrating its reasonableness (pp. 17, 18). Now, however, by a line of argument starting only from the *general* assumption without the individual element and moving by a wholly independent, objective path, the same individual element has been logically introduced and the same deduction, of immortality, reached. This enormously strengthens our position ; and, to anticipate a little the argument of Section 2, we can safely say that the validity of the Christian position depends on the amount of justification we can find from other considerations for our general assumption, without labouring to justify the inclusion of the individualist element.

It may be also noted that this corroboration has some bearing on opinion. Although the story be accepted because the faith is first assumed, yet as further investigation shows the difficulty of finding an alternative explanation for the story and further experience tallies with deductions from it, so its existence becomes a corroboration *in opinion* for our assumption. In the interregnum this is of little value to us as yet, as it involves much study of expert opinions and the reasoning supporting them.

At present, then, corroboration means that our deductions (including the individualist element) are vindicated by an objective route, the whole still resting on one fundamental assumption, the validity of the

moral sense. It also brings us the psychological satisfaction of being in company with the world's greatest spiritual geniuses in our outlook on life.

## APPENDIX B. (p. 47.)

I have scarcely touched on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but I think it finds a place in our beliefs as the outcome of our belief in a personal God when this belief is confronted with the experience of inability to do right. If, in the face of known inability, we still rely on the possibility of accomplishment, that implies an external source of power, and that we can receive from the "not-ourselves" the ability needful to success. This with our anthropomorphic figure means that God will supply strength for the attainment of holiness.

The testimony to this inability is very strong, and is found in writers not theological or even Christian<sup>1</sup>. Stevenson proposes "A faithful Failure<sup>2</sup>" as the noblest epitaph to be desired, and *Jekyll and Hyde* is full of generalizations as to the general tendency of mankind to fail in their own reformation. It is enough for our purpose that we should recognise this defect in ourselves. If we cannot *radically* reform ourselves the outward

<sup>1</sup> Video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor. OVID.

<sup>2</sup> "A Christmas Sermon."

reform must be defective unless such a radical reform can be accomplished by a power able to affect the spiritual roots of our life.

Intricate questions of psychological terminology are sometimes raised as to what "self" may properly connote; I am using here the *prima facie* language which is almost always the language of practical religion.

The essence of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in practical life is that reversal of the common experience of degeneration which is expressed by St Paul in the words "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death<sup>1</sup>." Taken in its context, and considering the reasons why he thus designates the Mosaic law which he is taking as the type of moral law, this passage means that he has escaped the universal experience of failure and degeneration through the operation of a renewing and sanctifying principle in Christian life. It is like that illustration in *The Pilgrim's Progress* where apparently every effort is being put forth to quench a fire, but it still burns because it is being secretly fed with oil. Cosmically expressed our faith implies that the forces promoting holiness do after all excel those hindering it; and our anthropomorphism allows us to restate it in the terms of this doctrine.

The doctrine is sometimes attacked on account of its supposed origin. In the early church it is clear

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii. 2.

that certain psychical manifestations were attributed to the Holy Spirit on the analogy of similar manifestations of an opposite moral character popularly ascribed to possession by evil spirits. In this connection it is important to remember that the origin of a doctrine does not determine its value alone. If it has a present religious value, it is valid whatever its origin. The use of the salicylates and of iron in medicine originated from wholly inadmissible reasoning, but no sound physician would fail to use them, though the reason of their action is unknown and is certainly not what it was supposed to be.

(I cannot here go into the question of demon possession. In the language of religion the term is perhaps admissible to connote a certain set of psychical phenomena; and there are not a few who after investigation adhere to the opinion that there is something more in these phenomena than ordinary insanity; they are marked by intermittent domination by suggestions of an immoral character and are often curable by the counter-suggestion of religion.)

It is important also to note that from the first it was recognised that these manifestations could be "counterfeited by the devil." St Paul and St John urge the Christians to "try the spirits<sup>1</sup>" by doctrinal and moral tests; any manifestations tending to upset mere orderliness in worship were to be rejected as not

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 1; see 2 Thessalonians ii. 2.

of Divine origin<sup>1</sup>; and St Paul classes with the more unusual manifestations, and above them, the sanctified use of the normal faculties of preaching and teaching. To him the fruits of the Spirit are not marvels but virtues; and so it is safe to say that the morality and not the marvellousness of the gifts was from the beginning the criterion of their origin, and the operation of the Spirit was seen in the sanctified use of the powers, normal or abnormal. To us who believe in a Spirit-God there cannot be any difficulty in using anthropomorphic language to denote this; and it is not open to the same objections as may be urged against it when used to speak of manifestations of evil, though even there the objections are not absolutely final.

## APPENDIX C. (p. 59.)

Since writing these Essays I have read Charles' *Eschatology*. It seems almost certain that the writer of Revelation believed in everlasting torment (or rather the writer of part of it, for it is supposed to incorporate a piece of a Jewish apocalyptic work). But Professor Charles is emphatic in denying that doctrine any right to a place in the Christian creed. He traces its origin

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

to a crude metaphysic as I have done, but historically. He believes that Christ definitely taught the opposite, that this doctrine is incompatible with other parts of the Revelation, and that it owes its inclusion simply to the survival of early Judaistic ideas in the incorporated fragment. Just as heathen Semitic conceptions of the after life were gradually reformed by the increasing appreciation of the character of God in Judaism, so some Judaistic notions have illogically passed over into Christian writings. (This book is most illuminating on many such questions.)

My argument in this Essay still holds good in so far as it shows that not even a reverence for the letter of the New Testament is violated by rejecting this doctrine; and, what is far more important, Christ's teaching has distinctly different implications. There is a school of orthodox Christians who hold that the sacred writers, while holding imperfect views, were divinely prevented from expressing them in their writings. To such my argument should be satisfactory (though I do not share their view), and it amply proves that rejection of this doctrine is permissible within the pale of strict orthodoxy.



## APPENDIX D. (p. 67.)

It is so important to see what we have and have not proved in this Section, that it will be well to sum up the argument.

We have seen that faith of some sort is implied in all consistent conduct. We then chose good conduct for ourselves and examined the faith implied in this. This faith we found to mean that the universe took cognisance of moral distinctions, and that the moral sense was valid. It also implied individual "success" as the outcome. These things confronted with death and sin implied immortality and progressive sanctification through the agency of power beyond that normally exercised by us. They also implied a simultaneous recognition and ignoring of past failure.

Then, returning to the genuine desire implicit in our chosen conduct, we saw that it meant the use of all reasonably useful helps to realisation of the good. We therefore adopted prayer and other such helps, and especially one implied in some of these—the anthropomorphic figure. Under the alchemy of this concept, our beliefs became beliefs in a Good Spirit God, the need of confession, forgiveness, and trust in His present spiritual help. Probably even the idea of the Atonement is involved in the combination of God's holiness with forgiveness.

At this point it is important to realise that we

adopted this concept because it was desirable, not because it was necessarily involved in the validity of the moral sense. This desirableness is sufficient ground for determining our interregnum attitude to an idea unless it is palpably absurd. The first apparent difficulty in the concept I showed to be removed by considering the mathematical parallel in the use of  $\infty$ . After that I introduced an argument (of the white stones) to show that probably the concept was implied in our faith in the moral sense. This is not essential to the argument of Section I, but if admitted both helps to justify our use of the figure and will, in Section II, form a link in one of the mutually corroborative chains that lead from simple considerations to the Christian creed.

Thirdly, we examined the effect of our assumption on our reading of historical evidence, and found that, if our faith in the *general* validity of the moral sense could be established, the gospel history was credible and corroborated our other deductions including the individualist element, the anthropomorphic figure, and the doctrines of forgiveness and sanctification. Other doctrines of the Atonement and the Holy Spirit we found to be consonant with the highest ideals involved in our faith, or perhaps corroborations and concrete fulfilments of expectations inherent in it. By this path, then, what was before desirable becomes necessary, unless further investigation shows that the Gospel story

is obviously to be rejected *on other grounds than those based on its supposed impossibility.*

Lastly, a creed was seen to be a desirable adjuvant to conduct, and the Christian creed the best.

Thus we concluded that it was lawful, reasonable, natural and desirable for one in the interregnum who truly desired to follow the highest conduct to rank himself among Christians as a Christian, even while acknowledging that he was not competent yet to form an opinion on the main controversy and that he could not see the point of much accepted Christian doctrine or answers to many difficulties in it. This attitude he may maintain even if the evidence seems distinctly against it, for while historic corroboration strengthens the fundamental beliefs, its absence does not destroy them; and the faintest chance of immortality is worth pursuit (p. 17).

Incidentally, before turning to the argument of Section 2, we may notice that we have come across some pieces of evidence for Christianity, which, though not conclusive, by their combined testimony form a considerable argument. The difficulty of finding an alternative explanation for the Christian history, gospel and experience, and the practical utility of the "universal adjuvants," in themselves form arguments. The former is admittedly a strong one; the latter must surely point to some feature in the nature of the cosmos, though its exact value is hard to gauge.

## APPENDIX E. (p. 82.)

The evidence derived from the Bible history is of the nature of testimony to a specific reaction to religious values, and is strong, though its absence would not discredit Christianity. The Christian religion is the product of the Jewish race and religion; "religion" in general has not been able to produce its absolute ethic. Now the Jewish race had nothing distinctive except its religion and the morality inculcated. In all the factors making for survival in those days it was deficient. That it survived at all, then, must be because of its religion; either because it gave it an advantage, or because the universe protected it from extinction; in other words because God providentially preserved it till its mission was accomplished. From the Bible history we can see that, though indeed the religion had a consolidating effect on the race, the survival of the race was, humanly speaking, a mere accident. Judaea was in constant terror of Assyria and Babylon, neighbouring nations were obliterated, five-sixths<sup>1</sup> of the Hebrew race has disappeared beyond all tracing, and Jerusalem owed its immunity to a series of accidents of geographical position and politics, culminating in the very singular "accident" to Sennacherib's army. Still the Jewish nation and religion survived, meeting apparently with

<sup>1</sup> The section which had most corrupted the religion.

the very experiences needed to correct and purify their religious concepts, until the acme was reached *and embodied* in the unique Figure of Jesus. Forty years later this would have been for ever impossible, and in fact no second such embodiment has appeared among the Jews. These facts of solid history, especially to those who for other reasons incline to believe in a spirit-God, are strongly suggestive of definite purpose at work in the development of Christianity; while the triumph of the developed religion and the approval of the moral sense, derived from the universe, are further evidences of its fundamental trueness.

## APPENDIX F. (p. 134.)

It may be well to sum up part of the argument of Section II.

To deny freedom in such a way as to deny morality, responsibility, etc., is to give the lie to our own senses. This may be perfectly legitimate if sufficient reason be shown for distrusting them in any given matter; but in this case the reason against freedom resolves itself into extension of an analogy from the inanimate and unconscious to the conscious and animate. This extension is very questionably legitimate. The further case

against freedom lies in the fact that we cannot conceive of the method of its exercise; to this must be opposed the undeniable fact that something undetermined must exist or have existed (see heading of Essay XII). Freedom, therefore, though indescribable, is certainly not impossible.

Since, then, in this instance there is no conclusive reason for disbelieving our senses, such an arbitrary disbelief is of a nature which cuts at the root of all knowledge; nothing can be concluded or known. From this sceptical chaos we can emerge only by an act of faith, literally and actually; which act justifies, or perhaps compels, a precisely parallel act of faith in the moral sense, and consequently in some sort of freedom. The deductions from this have as much right to be associated with the sense of conviction and to be called knowledge as the deductions from faith in the rational sense.

In Section I I have shown that the essence of Christianity is derivable from an individualist faith in the moral sense. In Section II I have shown that while perhaps the individualist element is not so obviously justifiable in logic the main faith is justifiable; and the specific historical testimony to Christianity, rendered credible by this justified faith, is abundantly sufficient to warrant an acceptance of it with its individualist elements. (As a matter of fact, I think the acceptance of the main faith can be shown to

involve the acceptance of the individualist element, but the same end is attained by historical considerations; and my aim is only to clear the ground of prejudice against these.) The conclusion is that Christianity has not been so discredited as to be unworthy of consideration; on the contrary it is the natural deduction from the facts of history and experience *if* we approach these with faith in the moral sense. This faith is justifiable, and is the faith implied in the earnest desire for goodness; therefore it is not only lawful and desirable, but also reasonable, to be a Christian.





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